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For Love of Odette;

Or, RESISTLESS FATE'S DECREE. *By Stanley F. Matthews*

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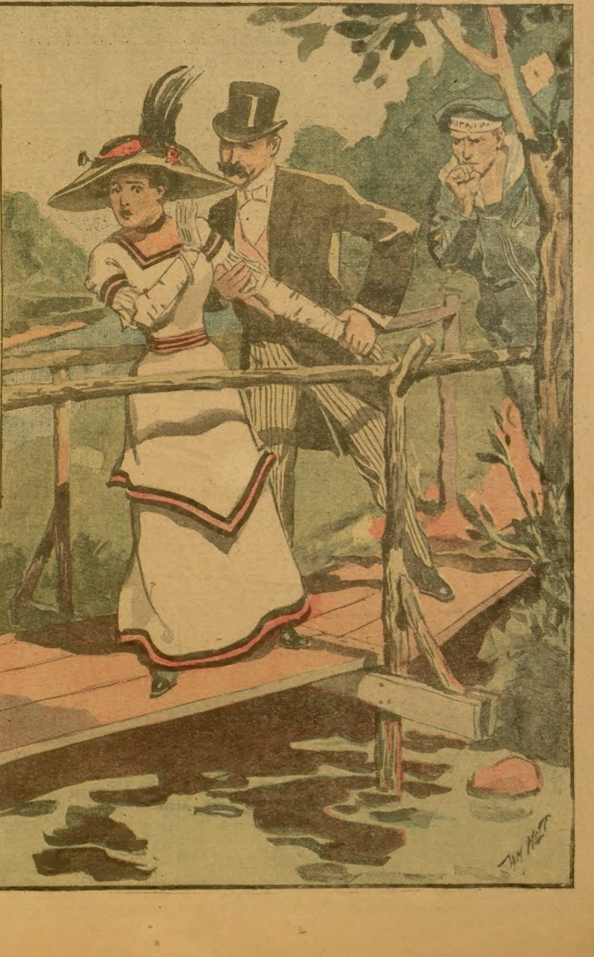
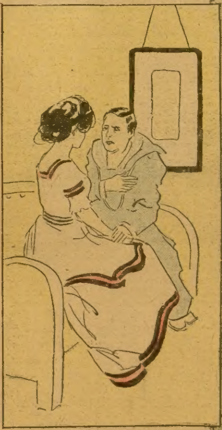
CHAPTER I.

THE MAN FROM BRAZIL.



Odette stood upon the rustic footbridge that crossed the little stream just at its junction with the pond.

The cheery gurgling of water, together with the merry songs of birds, and the clear azure sky overhead seemed to fill her young heart with happiness.



At any rate something caused her face to wear a smile; but from the frequent glances which she cast along the footpath it might be judged that the anticipation of an expected meeting had considerable to do with her high spirits.

Odette Morris made a charming picture as she stood there, dainty in her modest frock, and with her pretty face aglow with the hue of health.

At least so thought a gentleman who, coming around a bend in the path, stood for a minute to drink in the scene with an expression of pleasure.

He was well dressed, exceedingly so even to the verge of foppishness, and there was that in his handsome, swarthy face to indicate that he might be a foreigner, possibly attached to one of the legations at Washington, just a few miles away from this rustic Virginia Paradise.

In truth, Senor Rodriguez claimed to be connected with the Brazilian Government, in the capacity of secret diplomatic agent; and seemed on terms of intimacy with many leading dignitaries in the national capital.

He stood there twirling his heavy black mustache and looking upon the picture of the girl on the rustic bridge with kindling eyes; for evidently the dashing senor had fallen a victim to a consuming passion, and the object of it was even now before him.

Unable to remain still longer, he started impulsively forward.

As the crunch of his footsteps reached the girl a flood of crimson swept over her face, and she looked around eagerly; but the astute gentleman of the world knew that this trepidation had not been brought about on his account, for upon seeing who it was a shade of deep disappointment supplanted the expectant light. And understanding, the senor ground his strong white teeth in disgust, even though he still smiled outwardly.

"A wood nymph caught unawares," he exclaimed in the softest tones imaginable; and yet one who was accustomed to reading human nature would immediately realize that the owner of that voice was a man who wore a velvet glove, but only to conceal the iron grip.

He spoke English as well as the next one, though occasionally when excited the senor was apt to drop back upon some word in his native tongue, as if unable to find anything strong enough to suit his humor outside of Portuguese or Spanish.

Odette had seen considerable of this man in the last three months.

He had asked for an introduction to her when she was visiting a friend in the capital, and while at the theater.

Ever since he had taken every available opportunity to call upon her, nor did it matter that she steadfastly declined his many warm invitations to attend places of entertainment, or dine at one of the swell restaurants; he seemed determined to follow up the acquaintance persistently, and moreover, he was so gallant in his deportment that it was difficult to find fault with his actions.

The young girl on her part had shown at least an ordinary interest in this handsome foreigner.

She was often in his society when at social functions with the Washington school friend, whose father chanced to be a rich Senator; and those who watched the progress of events, with the earnest conversations between the two, predicted a match.

There were some things these busybodies did not chance to know, or they might not have felt so positive in their prophecies.

Odette had developed a strange interest in all that pertained to Brazil, the laws and customs of the country, and even the old families who had settled there half a century and more back.

This interest was not of recent date, but went back some three years, to the time she had lost her father by accident; so that the senor deceived himself if he ever thought his presence inspired it.

On the contrary it was likely that her strange interest in everything pertaining to Brazil may have been the reason for her allowing Senor Carlos many an interview, rather than anything about his engaging personality.

If he asked her numerous questions on the one hand, she reciprocated the desire for knowledge—while he seemed interested in genealogy and her particular ancestors, Odette never once asked about the stock from which the gallant gentleman had sprung.

And now for really the first time she manifested uneasiness and almost displeasure at sight of him swinging down the woodland path near her home.

"I am surprised to see you, Senor Carlos, naturally enough. How did you manage to drift down to this almost forgotten corner of the world?" she asked, trying to appear at her ease, though it was hard work.

"Can you say that, senorita? Did I not ask permission to call upon you some time?"

"I believe you did, and I discouraged you all I could by telling you what dreadful fare the village tavern served travelers, who never came a second time," she said, accepting his extended hand, though evidently with extreme reluctance, for the fire burning in his dark eyes alarmed her.

"It was food fit for the gods, and the wine of ambrosia, for all I know, since I had thought for only one thing, and that the delightful anticipation of seeing you shortly," he exclaimed, eagerly, still holding her hand.

"But how about your important duties in Washington—what will the minister say when he finds you are neglecting the diplomatic mission upon which you are engaged? He will be angry with you. I have heard him say that nothing should ever be allowed to come before one's service to one's country," she went on, trying to ward off that which some subtle intuition told her was imminent, but in her confusion only hastening the climax.

"I hold my duties to my country high, senorita, but even they shall not stand between my heart and the object of its sincere adoration. You must have known before now that I love you——"

"Oh! please do not finish what you were about to say; I beg of you to stop! I did not dream that our friendly conversations entered upon with a mutual desire for acquiring knowledge, would come to this. What you would ask is impossible, senor, and I would not have had this happen for the world," she exclaimed, trying to wrest her hand free, which he seemed very loth to allow.

"But I would not hurry you, senorita, if you think we have not known each other long enough. Willingly would I await your pleasure, as long as seemed fit, always serving you loyally, and ready to obey your slightest whim. Mine is a love that once it has sprung into life can never die. I beg of you to give me some encouragement, however faint," he went on, trying to look into her eyes, which she kept averted from him.

"Senor, you are hurting my hand. Please release it," she said, now coldly, for the manner in which he took her words warned her that he did not mean to submit meekly to a dismissal, or take her plain "no" as a rebuff.

"Pardon me, but I cannot find the heart to release it until you tell me that in time you may perhaps learn to look upon me with kindness, and give me a grain of encouragement. It would be folly for me to attempt to return to business with this load of uncertainty on my heart," he went on, pleadingly.

"Senor, you are hurting my hand. Young girls in this country are not accustomed to be compelled to tell a gentleman that twice."

This time he dropped the fingers which he had been crushing between his own, and something like a dark scowl passed over his face, though it was immediately gone.

"Still I would not despair, senorita, if I but knew there was no other ahead of me in your affections. I would gladly wait and hope and serve. You do not answer, and you turn pale and red by turns! Then it is true what I have heard whispered, and you have a lover, a common sailor it is said, on board one of the battleships that visited my country. Carajo! perhaps I shall some day have the pleasure of meeting him—perhaps I may even encourage him to the point of insulting me, when we can settle our differences with sword or pistol, as gentlemen do in my native land. And should some sad end come upon your boy lover, senorita, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that such a catastrophe was solely brought about through your encouragement of my addresses, and subsequent refusal of my suit. Upon your head be the consequences," he exclaimed, hotly.

Odette seemed to regain her courage at hearing such an unmanly threat.

Her glorious eyes blazed as she faced the Brazilian dandy, saying:

"No one but a coward would threaten a lady, sir. As for what you say, if I have a dear friend on board one of those same battleships, depend upon it he is fully able to look out for himself, and it may not be wise on your part to force a quarrel on him. Americans have a way of treating such matters after a fashion of their own that is not always relished by fire-eaters of other countries. And after what you have said, Senor Rodriguez, you can understand that our acquaintance is at an end."

"You may say so, charming girl, but that will not always follow. I refuse to take my dismissal so curtly. In my country when a gentleman loves a maid he wins her in spite of anything to the contrary. So I shall yet hope to hear those sweet lips confess that the passion which is consuming me is returned. Listen to me and pay heed. You know full well that your young life is overshadowed by a secret that has ere now cost your family dear. I, and I alone, am empowered to treat with you and absolve you from the dreadful conditions of that fatal trust. It was while in the discharge of my duty in that respect that I came to love you, and now everything is subservient to that consuming passion. You must be mine—the gods have declared it! In my country you would occupy one of the highest places in the land as my wife, with estates in three places, and a palace in Rio Janeiro. Do not be hasty, senorita. Listen to my pleading. Give me the encouragement my love demands. I cannot leave you without some words of comfort. See, I kneel to you, something I once swore to do before no woman on earth. You must not turn away—I will not let you go, for I have sworn by everything holy that you shall be mine."

The senor had worked himself into a state bordering on folly, for he seized the hand of Odette again, and tried to draw her to him.

Of course the young girl screamed and endeavored to break away from his detaining clutch; and the more she struggled the tighter he held on, for having once crossed the Rubicon he seemed to feel that he could not retreat.

Evidently the gallant senor did not know the humor in which American girls were wont to be wooed, if he thought such violent tactics would gain his point.

It was while the struggle was taking place that a figure shot around the same turn in the path lately used by the Bralizian wooer—a figure clad in the well-known blue of Uncle Sam's navy boys, with insignia on his sleeve to indicate the fact that he was holding down a petty officer's position in the wireless corps.

This individual fairly flew toward the rustic bridge, and reaching the two who stood there, the girl uttering little cries for help, and the Brazilian laughing at her efforts to elude his encircling arm, he grasped Senor Carlos by the nape of the neck, tore him loose from the girl, and with a fine exhibition of righteous indignation hurled him against the railing, which, giving way with a crash allowed the gallant senor to fall into the pond below, where his arrival was announced by a terrific splash.

Odette gave a scream of joy.

"Oh! Miles, how glad I am to see you, and you served that contemptible puppy just right," she sobbed, as she threw herself into his eager arms.

CHAPTER II.

HER LOVER.

Miles Hamilton had been boiling over with indignation when he rushed upon the scene, and so summarily disposed of the foreign gentleman; but his humor changed as soon as he held his sweetheart in his arms, and saw the desperate floundering of the man in the pond below.

The water was chilly, and poor Senor Carlos had his best suit on his back—moreover, there was the shock to his feelings to be considered, and above all the fact of his being an indifferent swimmer; so that it was no wonder he made quite a mess of it while struggling to emerge from his unexpected bath.

The taunting laugh of the young wireless operator stung like a scorpion's lash, and he crawled clumsily out of the pond, with water streaming from the ends of his fingers, and oozing from his boots, the Brazilian dandy no longer felt the chill of his immersion, for his blood boiled with fury.

He put his hand to a pocket as if to draw a weapon, and the action was so significant that even Odette could understand, and a sudden terror possessed her gentle heart.

"Oh! Miles, he will shoot you—be careful, I beg of you!" she cried, tugging at the blue sleeve of the other.

"Not today, darling. I guess Mr. Man has his firearm pretty well soaked by this time, so you see what a double purpose that tumble accomplished—cooled his ardent wooing, and prevented him from doing murder. Who is he, and what business has he making love to you? If he was in fit condition to touch I'd be tempted to go down there and kick him off the grounds," exclaimed Miles, his indignation again soaring as he remembered the scene he had disturbed by his coming.

"Let him go, dear Miles. He has had a lesson he will not be apt to forget. It was partly my fault, too, because I have been so interested in Brazil, and wished to ask him so many questions about his country, that possibly he thought I took a deeper interest in him than that of a casual acquaintance. It emboldened him to come here and ask me to marry him; then he demanded to know whether there was any one else before him, and seeing from my actions that it was so he denounced you, of whom it seems he had been warned, and—well, the rest you know," she said, hurriedly.

Miles looked over the broken parapet of the rustic bridge, with a new interest.

"So," he remarked, chuckling, "that is the exquisite Don Carlos, is it? Glad to know you, senor, even if our introduction was a bit of rough-house play. But, dearest, are you not mistaken; for I'll be hanged if I can reconcile myself to the fact that this shivering, bedraggled fellow is the same immaculately dressed dandy you described in your letter to me, received at Suez. If so, then a great transformation scene has taken place, and I'm the little fairy with my magic wand who is responsible for the change."

The gentleman below had by this time succeeded in allowing some of the surplus pond water to leave his person; and, of course, all this talk had reached his ears, very nearly causing him to have a fit, so great was his rage.

"This is your hour, young senor, and see to it that you make the most of it; for conditions will change, and he laughs loudest who laughs last. You have insulted a Brazilian gentleman, and sooner or later you must pay dearly for the indignity you put upon him, when without a word of warning, in a cowardly way so peculiar to Yankees, you threw me into this duck pond. Beware!" he cried aloud.

Miles only laughed scornfully.

"It is really as good as a play in a Bowery theater, to hear the villain rant in that style. Why, bless your innocent heart, what sort of a valiant man do you call yourself, to be using violence toward a young lady who chooses to refuse the high honor of calling a pig and a poltroon husband? B-r-r! go chase yourself, Senor Carlos. I've met many of your countrymen, but never yet one who was not a gentleman, until today. And remember, that if you persist in annoying this lady, who is my promised wife, I'll do something more elaborate than simply shoving you into a duck pond. That is no idle threat, but business, and if you know what's good for you it will stick in your mind. Now we can dispense with your services; and besides, you are apt to find a chill in this spring air unless you get a move on you in a hurry. Come, darling, let us quit this romantic scene, and spare the don's lacerated feelings further."

Clinging to her lover's arm, Odette did not cast another glance toward the bedraggled figure of the discomfitted Brazilian, but allowed Miles to lead her away.

And when the baffled wooer from a strange land hurried toward the village he was uttering maledictions in Spanish, and breathing dire threats after a fashion that would, as Miles had remarked, have gained him the plaudits of the gallery gods in a Bowery theater.

"You are trembling, my dear girl. That brute must have alarmed you more than I imagined; and I wish now I had given him a bit of dressing down in addition to a free bath. It may not be too late yet," Miles said, after they had turned the bend in the path, and were out of sight of the bridge.

"No, no, please do not think of such a thing. I was excited and indignant, for it never entered my head that a man so polished as the senor could be guilty of such ungentlemanly conduct. But it is over now, and I am happy in the fact that you are with me again. Oh, Miles! just to think that it is much more than a year since we met. And you have changed, too; why, I should hardly have known you only for the sailor clothes, and the fact that I was looking for you."

"I don't know whether to take that as a compliment or not. I'm as brown as a coffee berry—ugh! that makes me think of our Brazilian chump, and I don't want to do that. I'm stouter and more robust, that goes without saying, but as to any improvement in looks, I doubt it," he laughed, as they walked along, his arm slipping around her waist so very naturally that it seemed to have a perfect right there.

She bent forward and looked at him eagerly.

"I won't tell you what I think. It would make you too vain and conceited. It is enough to say I am the happiest girl in all Virginia today. Oh! the days and weeks and months have been so long. With you a change of scene and the excitement of the long voyage brought solace; but save for my visit to Washington I have gone about here in the old home, wandering over paths that all reminded me of the boy at the other side of the world. I hope it will never happen again, dear Miles, for I could not bear it. If you would only purchase your release from the navy, we could be married, and I would never have to feel lonely again."

"What a blessed thing it would be," he said, brushing her hair back from her temples and kissing her again and again. "But you know I have less than a year to serve. By that time I hope to have enough saved to start in the business I had planned. If I should leave now, it would take part of my money to pay for my release, and I would not be able to carry out my plan. Delightful though it seems to anticipate the speedy realization of our dreams, I dare not do it, darling, for it would necessitate my taking a position, with a salary not sufficient for for our wants, and I would not have you suffer. We must try and be patient, hard as it seems. I shall have an opportunity of seeing you frequently, now, because, except for a run North in summer, and South in winter for gun practice, the fleet will remain about Hampton Roads during the balance of my enlistment."

Odette looked very serious.

She shook her head and sighed.

"Oh! if I only dared do it! Surely the cause would have some effect in mitigating the curse," she said, as if to herself.

Miles turned to regard her with surprise.

"I do not understand what you are saying, darling," he exclaimed; "and I fear that ruffian has quite upset you. Think no more about what has happened today. Let us be completely happy in each other's company, and look forward to the future with hope and anticipation."

"It is not that, Miles. I will explain to you a little later, for I had resolved that the time had come to tell you a strange thing, of which I have been aware just three years, and revealed to me by my dear father on his deathbed. Wait until we are at the house. Now, begin to tell me of your wonderful voyage, and the multitude of strange things you have seen and experienced since you went out from Hampton Roads. It is like a dream to think that a year and a half have gone since last we met; and yet, in another way, it has seemed like an eternity."

So talking, they sauntered along, drawing gradually nearer to the farmhouse that was Odette's home.

Miles was a good talker, and he had an inexhaustible fund of reminiscences to draw upon; besides, the girl asked many questions, for she had kept in close touch with the long voyage of the battleship fleet, and had received scores upon scores of letters from the wireless man while he sailed into the West.

It struck Miles suddenly that her chief interest seemed to lie in his visit to the great Brazilian capital, and many of her questions centered about Rio Janeiro, its people, their habits, the names of the prominent families, and in fact, everything connected with life in that faraway Southern metropolis.

Miles also remembered that she had asked him when leaving to be sure and write her additionally long letters from that city, as she was studying up Brazilian history and character.

It now struck him as peculiar indeed that in addition to these things, upon his return home after an absence of almost a year and a half he should find her in the company of a Brazilian gallant, who was making violent love to her.

These facts, taken severally and together, caused the young wireless man to feel that there was indeed some mystery connected with this matter; but he was not given to undue worry, and she had just declared that she meant to explain her actions presently, so Miles put the subject away from his thoughts, and simply gloried in the consciousness of her being there in his arms.

He was a fine manly-looking young chap, a typical American, and with candor and honesty stamped upon his healthy countenance; just the opposite of the dark-faced, handsome but unprincipled Senor Carlos, as Odette was thinking when she turned to look up at him again and again with kindling eyes.

It seemed as though they could not drink in enough of each other—the separation had been so long, and the distance lying between these loving hearts so vast.

Odette changed her mind as she walked.

The air may have seemed chilly to Senor Carlos, but then he was saturated to the skin with the water of the pond; to healthy young persons it was almost balmy, and the little arbor in the garden looked very inviting.

So it happened that they were presently ensconced there, with Odette cuddling up against the broad shoulder of her sailor boy, and he feasting his eyes upon the fair face that had followed him throughout the tens of thousands of miles around the world, in his musings by day, in dreams by night, the only lode-stone that drew him back to the home country—for Miles had no family ties, being an orphan.

"Now," he said, after they had talked for a long time, "how about that little confession you wanted to make to me, dearest? If I can help you with advice, or in any other way, take me into your confidence; but if it is going to give you pain to do so, please forget it. I am not over curious, you know, and I could trust you in anything."

She drew a long breath and looked at him seriously.

"I have known that it must be done, this long time, Miles dear, and had resolved to tell you the strange story as soon as you came back to me; for you must be concerned in it, as you are in me. So, now listen to what my father told me."

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGE LEGACY.

"Many years ago, it must have been more than fifty, I think, there were living in Brazil two men who had been friends, though of different temperaments, one being so thrifty that he eventually became a usurer and wealthy, while the other was at the same time a spendthrift and pretty much of an adventurer.

"One of the weaknesses of the money-lender was a passion for diamonds, and he had secretly accumulated a wonderful collection of magnificent stones, upon which he was wont in secret to feast his eyes just as a miser does with his gold.

"But despite his great caution some one must have discovered his secret, for one day the bag of diamonds was stolen, and the distracted money-lender almost went out of his mind with rage and distress.

"It was never known who the guilty wretch was who took the fortune in stones; but suspicion fell on the spendthrift, though he continued to live among them as before for a year, ere returning to the United States.

"The money-lender in his grief over his loss cursed the thief over and over again, and swore that so long as the precious stones remained in the hands of those other

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than the rightful heirs they would bring disaster upon that person and his family. His manner was so terrible that it affected the wretched man who had really stolen the gems; and when he finally returned to his native country and carried the priceless treasure with him he dared not use a single stone of the lot for fear of the consequences.

"The spendthrift married here, and raised a son; but years elapsed and the diamonds remained hidden under the ground. He had told the secret to his wife, but she advised him against touching the accursed things, being sure some evil must come upon them if he did so.

"Finally, when the boy was half-grown, business reverses brought them low, and the father was tempted to take out one of the stones, and dispose of it; for he declared it was the height of folly to have a fortune lying there while they were almost in need; besides, he scoffed at the idea of that miserly usurer's curse remaining upon the beautiful stones all these years.

"His wife followed him out in the night to where the stones were buried at the foot of a tree. It was storming at the time, and by the flashes of lightning he unearthed the box in which he had buried the gems; but just as he was about to take one from the nest a bolt struck the tree under which he knelt, and the curse of the miser was fulfilled.

"Horrified, the wife, when she recovered her senses, buried the fateful gems again, and staggered away for help.

"Time went on, the boy grew to manhood, married and had a family of three sons. On her deathbed the mother told him of their strange inheritance, and made him promise never to attempt to dispose of the diamonds that had come to them in so dishonorable a way.

"Years later the man fell into trouble, and revealing the story to his sons it was decided that they should take one of the stones to New York and sell it, with an option on the balance, or a part at least.

"This was done, and strange to say while the father and two of his sons were on the way home the train was wrecked and all killed.

"This left the younger son as custodian for the awful trust, and he remained faithful for many years, happy in his little family, for he had a beloved wife and a girl in his home.

"That girl was myself, Miles. Thus you see that I am descended from the wretched Abner Morris, who originally stole the diamonds from the money-lender in Rio Janeiro many years ago.

"My mother died, without knowing of the strange legacy entrusted to our keeping, for I found out afterward that my father had conscientiously endeavored to discover the heirs of the money-lender, without success.

"Like the others, temptation came to him at last, for it seemed as if with the passage of many years the curse must have lost its force, and that he was entitled to some compensation for the guardianship of the treasure.

"Alas! it was a grievous reckoning he paid, for while nothing happened while he was on his way to New York, for it was only there he dared sell such a magnificent stone, on his return his horse fell as he was coming from the station up to the house, here, and he broke his ankle. It seemed as though the curse had exhausted its virus, as he told me when relating the whole strange story, for he was well on the road to recovery, and even planning what he would do to build up his fortunes with the proceeds from half a dozen of the smallest gems, when necrosis of the bone set in, he suffered agonies for months, and finally passed away.

"That left me the sole guardian of this terrible trust that has been entailed upon my family all these decades through the rascality of an ancestor.

"I have never dared even look at the diamonds, but I know where they are hidden. Sometimes I have even contemplated placing the matter in the hands of the authorities and shifting the responsibility; but it seems impressed upon my mind that since a Morris was guilty of purloining them so long ago, it rests with one of the same strain to finally restore them to the heirs of the original owner.

"What money was left from the sale of that single stone I have religiously applied to the purpose of discovering by advertising and otherwise, any possible trace of the money-lender; but without success. A few inquiries have resulted, but they seemed to be the result of curiosity rather than any connection with the point at issue.

"And of late, dear Miles, I have been sorely tempted to consider the use of just one of these stones, lying there so utterly useless, to place you in a position where our happiness would no longer be delayed. Why should we suffer and be compelled to wait these weary months when I have a vast fortune under my very fingers, that belongs to me more than to any other person on earth, that is so far as can be discovered."

She stopped and waited to hear what Miles would say.

He had listened to this wonderful tale with intense interest, and at its conclusion he shook his head seriously.

"It is a marvelous thing you tell me. I never suspected this poor little head was wrestling with so weighty a problem. You should have taken me into your confidence sooner, darling, and I could have shared your anxiety, perhaps given you the advice you ask now," he said, gravely.

"What is your opinion? When people find valuables they have no right to the same until they have exhausted every reasonable means for finding the owner. Then in the eye of the law they are justified in turning the same to their own use. That was the foundation I was building on. My father and later myself had gone to great trouble and expense to locate the heirs of that money-lender, without avail, and it would seem that I might be justified in applying a portion of the treasure to my own use. Surely the law would uphold me in that," she declared.

"Let us see. This is a serious proposition, and not to be trifled with. It has, as you say, already cost your family dear, and we can't afford to have a similar fatality overtake either or both of us. Of course, I do not admit that it was the curse put upon the stones that has brought about these events. It may have been just a singular coincidence; but nevertheless, the fact that they did happen is enough to make one cautious in dealing with the matter. Not for ten fortunes in diamonds would I run the chance of some evil befalling you, darling. You say one is justified in the eye of the law in appropriating to one's own use valuables that have been found, after all possible measures for discovering the owner have failed to accomplish this. But while your father and yourself did advertise and make earnest search, do not forget, dear, that these diamonds were not lost but stolen in the first place."

"Yes, yes, I had often considered the difference, and it was that which made me hesitate so long, and wait for you to advise me," she replied.

"There is a moral question involved. If it had been your father who had actually stolen the jewels you would shrink from accepting any advantage from the proceeds of the robbery. Does it make any material difference because the one who took them unlawfully was further removed? They were stolen property at the time the wretched spendthrift first secreted them, and such they remain to this day. No, you must put from your mind any thought of using these stones as a basis of our future happiness. I am afraid they would carry some of the misfortune that seems to hang about them into our little home nest, and wring our hearts with sorrow and regret. We can win without taking such a dreadful risk, darling. The months will soon pass now, and I shall see you often. Let the fatal stones rest in their hiding place, and perhaps some day we may be able to restore them to the rightful heirs of the man who was robbed, thus rectifying the wrong."

"But what do you think of me as a descendant of a robber—are you not afraid to marry into such a family?" she asked, laughingly, yet looking half anxiously into his eyes.

His answer was just what any sincere lover's would have been, nor did he hesitate to repeat it again and again.

"Although I do not just now recall that any of my ancestors away back were robbers, or that I ever had one in the family who was hung, yet I strongly suspect there must have been a few of those ancient worthies who ought to have had their necks stretched, if they received their just dues. Forget all about that part of it, dear. You are more precious to me than ever before, now that I know what a terrible burden your father bequeathed to you. Of course, it is plain enough to me now why you have had such a strange interest in everything pertaining to Brazil and her people. You were hoping to learn something that would put you on the track of that money-lender's heirs. But how strange it seems that the first fellow I should run across upon my return to you should be a Brazilian."

At his words Odette turned pale.

"I have just remembered something that man said while upbraiding me for refusing to give him encouragement," she said, anxiety in her tone.

"What was that—anything in connection with your secret?" asked Miles, quickly, as if his suspicions might have been suddenly aroused.

"Yes, you have guessed it at once. This is what he said, and I think I can repeat every word, for they seemed burned in my memory: 'You know full well that your young life is overshadowed by a secret that has ere now cost your family dear. I, and I alone, am empowered to treat with you and absolve you from the dreadful conditions of that fatal trust. It was while in the discharge of my duty in that respect that I came to love you, and now everything is subservient to that passion.' What could he have meant, Miles dear? Surely that mysterious man must know about the diamonds. Has he been sent here by the Government of Brazil to reclaim the long lost treasure? It is a new source of anxiety to me."

Miles was thinking, and he smote his forehead as though some forceful idea had flashed upon him.

"I do not think that could be so, for the Government would have no claim on the stones, save the duty they levy on all gems leaving the country. No, if Senor Carlos knows anything about the treasure it must be from some standpoint in connection with the natural heirs. We must talk this over again, darling, and try and discover what he means to do. His meeting with you was no accident, but done with a deep design. This may even be the secret of his mission to Washington. You say he was intensely interested in all your ancestors. Genealogy is his long suit just now, because there is a bag of wonderful diamonds hidden at the foot of the rainbow he is chasing. But cheer up; your own Miles is here to fight your battles, and he feels equal to a dozen Brazilians just now."

The continuation of this most romantic story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and fascinating situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

A Boss' Dignity.

"The 'boss' who disdains to accept an occasional hint from a subordinate is bound sometime to hav his egotism come a cropper," remarked Walt McDougall. "I once had a controlling interest," he went on, "in an up-state amusement park. The venture wasn't panning out well financially, so I resolved upon a strict examination into the methods of the manager.

"Bright and early one morning I arrived at the park, where I found several workmen engaged in the construction of a new 'feature.' Near by sat a man, idly watching. Ah, this was indeed suggestive of lax system!

"'Come with me, sir!' said I sternly to the workman.

"He followed, without a word.

"'Mr. Jones, pay this man off,' I abruptly ordered the manager when we arrived at the local office.

"'But, Mr. McDougall—' began that official.

"'That will do,' I replied, with increasing indignation. 'Give him a day's wages at once!'

"When the fellow was paid and had vanished with amazing celerity I demanded:

"'Now, sir, perhaps you can give me some reason for hiring such worthless vagabonds.'

"'Why, Mr. McDougall,' he was finally able to explain, 'that fellow was never in our employ; he was merely a spectator!'"

THE LOVER'S ANSWER.

You ask me why I love you! Can you tell
  Why violets purple the cool woods in May?
Or why spring-beauties carpet every dell?
  Or why bright stars flash out on heaven's highway?

Ah, can you tell me why the rainbow gleams
  A tinted arch against a tear-wet sky?
Or can you tell the secret of the streams
  That murmur like a tender lullaby?

Ah, can you tell me why the wood-thrush sings?
  Or why a golden light rests on the sea?
Or why 'mong moss and fern are living springs?
  Or why sweet odors lure the honey bee?

Canst tell why lilies are as pure as snow?
  Or why the rose in beauty is complete?
If you can tell me why these things are so—
  Then I can tell thee why I love thee, sweet.

THE FOX HUNT.

BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE.

I did want to see a real fox hunt. I do not see much excitement in my quiet life. Once I saw a cat fight; it was terrible, but I was too young to either enjoy or appreciate the grandeur of the spectacle. And it was so long ago that I have completely forgotten which cat whipped. I think it was the other one, but I cannot feel sufficiently confident to put up any money on it.

Thus the blighting shadow of another mystery falls upon my life, and one more tally is added to the long score of things I do not know.

One time, I remember also, when I was a child, a traveling tinker stopped at my father's house to plug up a few hundred apertures in the family plate. While he was doctoring a diagonal slit in a quaint old copper-bottomed wash boiler that had come over with William the Conqueror, he spilled about three cents' worth of molten solder into his shoe. I was young, a mere child, all unused to scenes of violence and cyclonic fury; but that spectacle burned itself into my memory like a U. S. brand. As though it were but yesterday—whereas it really is today—I can remember just how the tinker stood on his head to empty his shoe, and how the hot solder at once fell out and dropped like a plummet into his ear. I also remember what he said—not necessarily for publication, but because I cannot help it.

What have these incidents to do with a fox hunt, do you ask? Nothing whatever. Then why do I repeat them? To pad out the story, simple one; to help fill up the column. Perhaps you never wrote a story yourself? No? Well, then, you can't be expected to know how little connection one part of a story has with itself or with the other parts.

Shortly after the Civil War business of an unimportant nature called me to Virginia. My business was with the sheriff of a remote county in Oregon, so I naturally went as far southeast as possible to attend to it. While I loitered among my friends, a vague, indefinable yearning to witness a fox hunt crept into my heart with the stealthy, noiseless footfall of a man coming home late. My indulgent uncle—an honest man, although a farmer—told his boys to trap a fox, and they would arrange a run for me.

The fox was caught, the word sent round, and the following morning the neighbors assembled. There was no regularly ordained pack of hounds in the county, so every man who owned a good fox dog was expected to bring him along. Every man in the hunt owned just that kind of a dog.

Bill Lamson brought a black-and-tan dog—"Beeswax"—about two and a half hands high, with a back as broad as a breadboard and a stump of a tail as long as your thumb. "She wur a nat'ral coon dog," Bill said; "jest chain lightnin' on coons, but a right likely dog for a fox, if she could oncest kech him." I surmised that Bill was going to carry "Beeswax" in his arms and run with her.

Jeff Thompson had a straight-haired brindle dog, with remnants of ears and legs so bandy they looked like ice tongs with hair on. He was chained to a sapling, and I noticed that none of the other dogs went within ten feet of that sapling. He "oncest help to kill a b'ar," Mr. Thompson told me, "an' mo' 'an likely he c'u'd 'a' kilt hit hisself; an' foxes was on'y sport fur 'Reb.'" The only drawback to "Reb's" usefulness as a fox dog was his blindness. But he couldn't help that.

Bart Hillary brought along a big black "Newfoundland" about the size of a yearling calf, but not nearly so quick and graceful. He seemed to be fond of getting into people's way and getting kicked therefor. He also managed to step on himself with two or three horses. He "hadn't never been tried for nothin'," Bart said, "but he reckoned he might be right peart on a plain trail."

Then there were house dogs, of all sizes, classes, colors, and combinations of colors; Hank Lowden's fawn-colored meathound, with liver-colored spots, was there, yelping distractedly all the time, and letting out a howl that you could hang your hat on every time anybody hit him with a riding whip to make him shut up. "Yallah dogs" to the extent of a dozen from the negro quarters and the cabins of the "sand-diggers," joined the band; one or two aristocratic setters and a gentleman-like pointer attended the hunt; and when Jute Sycamore came ambling over with his dog, a noisy, fussy, irritable, jealous, quarrelsome little Scotch ratter not much bigger than a cat, and most appropriately named "Rustler," the convention was called to order, and the order of the hunt announced.

The fox was to be given one hundred feet and ten seconds start; every man to loose his own dog at the word. The caged fox, nervous, uneasy, excited, was taken out the established distance; he shot out of the open door like a puff from a gun, and was out of sight before you could wink an eye. The dogs, seeing him go, set up a hideous combination of howl, and bark, and yelp that made your blood run cold; and blind old "Reb" driven to frenzy because he could see nothing to howl at, felt around and bit the man who held him and made him howl. We sat in our saddles, hearts beating like a pulse in a fever, eager, alert, expectant.

The starter threw up his hand with a shout, the dogs were loosed, and away dashed men, horses, and dogs, moved and thrilled by a common impulse—one wild wave of thrilling excitement.

Of course, Jute Sycamore's fussy little Scotch ratter managed to get away about a breath of a second before the other dogs, and away he went, yelping and snarling, and not having the remotest idea what he was going after or where he was going, and the first stump he saw, he started for it, intending to stop and dig under it. Before he reached it, Limp Ramsey's long-legged, lop-eared hound went loping past him like a flash of brown light. The pesky, irritable little ratter, indignant that any dog should pass him, made a jump and caught one of the flapping ears, bringing the hound to the ground with a howl as long as a clothesline. Right behind them was the big "Newfoundland," and he lumbered over the two struggling dogs, and came down on his side with a grunt, and before he could get up "Reb" followed his nose into the snarl of dogs and began chewing and shaking everything he could feel in his way.

Two "yallah" dogs came up and took sides, and then, as each "fox dog" reached the scene of action, he abandoned the chase, climbed to the top of the pile of struggling dogs, took hold of the apex of the pyramid and began to shake it, only to be clawed and "chewed" himself in like manner by the next dog that climbed to the top.

In a moment there was a sphere of dogs rolling around on the hill, about five feet in diameter. Now and then, as it rolled, a dog would fall out or drop off, but he would climb right back again and take hold of the first ear that afforded him a grip. When the ball rolled down hill, the dog that was on the bottom would come to the top, and when it rolled up hill—for it rolled and tumbled in every direction—the dog on top would be rolled to the bottom. Only the dog in the middle never changed his base. His position was one of great confinement, and he was encompassed about by them that sought his hurt, but no wise restricted, because no matter in what direction he reached and snapped, he found what he was after.

Well, Bart Hillary, not having seen his "Newfoundland" for some time, and knowing that he was somewhere in the heart of the "calm center" of that canine cyclone, and fearing that that calm center was not the best place in the world for a dog of retiring disposition and domestic tastes, and desiring to know just how much of him was left for future usefulness, and for fox hunts yet to be, blew a horn to call the dogs back.

The only dog that wasn't in action, the one lone, well-trained foxhound on the field, that stood looking from the maelstrom to the distant fox, hesitating whether to join his comrades in Donnybrook, or speed away to the chase, came trotting back the minute he heard the horn, apparently glad to have some one decide the troublesome question for him.

And the man who owned the dog was so "fightin' mad" to see any man interfere with his dog, that he rode over to Bart and with one awful blow knocked the hunting bugle into the middle of a sassafras thicket, and the astonished bugler out of his saddle. Then a "sand-digger," who had every reason to believe that his "yallah" dog had been killed and eaten long ago, thirsting for revenge, hauled the striker off his horse and "rastled" him down in a second.

Jeff Thompson, who knew that blind "Reb" was "right among the midst of that thar carnival," and was having a good time, if he was out of sight, laid wrathful hands on the "sand-digger," and began to maul him unmercifully.

Bart Hillary, dazed and bewildered, got up on his feet, and seeing a discussion going on, remembered only that he had been hit, waded in on general principles, and no questions asked. Then the Rev. Jasper Bogardus, the mildest, best old man that ever pounded a pulpit, took hold of Bart and Jeff to part them, when somebody thought he was taking a hand himself, and the next minute had his hands in the parson's hair, and then the whole crowd sailed in.

Everybody howled and everybody swore except the parson. He only said, "Bless my heart!" but every time he said it he fetched some man a "biff" in the jaw that made his teeth rattle.

The mound of men was higher than the sphere of dogs, and it changed its shape more constantly. Now and then a man would crawl out and go apart from the conflict a moment, while he tenderly held his nose in both hands, or petted his cheek, or softly soothed an ear that appeared en dishabille. Then he would swear and howl, and run back to the caucus, and kick and bite.

How everybody yelled! Once the very dogs paused in their own toil, and looked in dumb amazement at the writhing, whirling, yelling mass of profane humanity that was tramping the life out of the grass, and then, inspired by the example of their masters, they went at it again with renewed vigor.

But in a little while evidences of disintegration were visible in the tumbling sphere of dogs, which gradually crumbled into muttering atoms, that separated with remorseful moans, and squatting, each atom on its own haunches, began to make the usual surgical appliances to such of its hurts as were within reach. The human contingent thawed out and resolved itself into its component parts, each component loudly expressing his joyous hope, which was a declared conviction, that all the other components had got enough of it.

I came down from the pin oak into which I had ascended, being short of stature, in order to obtain a bird's-eye view of the parade ground, and the mournful procession of growling men and muttering, whining dogs started home, escorting a marvelous collection of bites and bruises.

And that was the first and only fox hunt I ever saw.

Oh! the fox? Well, the fox didn't run two hundred yards. When it heard the sounds of the conflict it turned and trotted back to the top of a little hill about two hundred feet away, and sat there and watched the fight with the greatest enjoyment, occasionally whirling its brush in a perfect ecstacy of delight when an unusually shrill howl told that some dog was being pulled clear in two. When the fight was over, it watched the procession form for the homeward march, and then sighed, and trotted composedly down the hill into the woods.

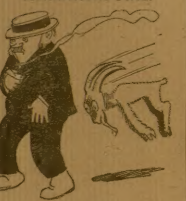
Bless you, yes; the fox was there all the time. Couldn't have a fox hunt without a fox, you know.

Pickled Peppers

TO MARRY OR NOT TO MARRY?

To pop or not to pop, that is the question;
  Whether 'tis easier for a man to suffer
  In single blessedness the rubs of fortune,
Or ask some pretty girl to share his troubles
  And by proposing end them? To woo, to wed,
  No more—and by a form to say he's free
From all the little ills a bachelor, poor man,
  Is plagued with—'tis a consummation
  Devoutly to be wished. To woo, to wed—
Perhaps a family! Ah! there's the rub;
  For in the marriage state what cares may come
  When he has taken to himself a wife
Must give him pause; there's the respect
  That makes celibacy of so long a life,
  For who would bear the washerwoman's crimes,
The buttonless shirt, the stockings full of holes,
  The pangs of collars with a sawlike edge,
  The lodging-keeper's sins, the cat's misdeeds,
And strange evaporation of his brandy,
  When he himself might his quietus make
  With a plain gold ring? Who would chambers keep
And growl and fret a solitary life
  But that the dread of endless tradesmen's bills
  (The housekeeping expenses, from whose doom
No Benedict escapes) puzzles the will
  And makes him rather bear the ills he has
  Than fly to others that perhaps are worse.
Thus prudence makes a coward of a man,
  And thus we see most desperate flirtations
  On this account too often end in smoke,
And promises apparently of granite
  Are broken like the crust of apple pie,
  And ladies bring an "action."

Architectural Term.



A-butt-meant.

Evolving a Plot.

The young author was complaining to the experienced litterateur of a dearth of suitable plot material.

"Well, invent a few," the elder man advised. "Put off your writing for a time and devote your attention to plot building until you have acquired a supply. Now, here is a suggestion for a plot: A young man is let down at the end of a rope into a seemingly bottomless abyss, heretofore unexplored. The rope is torn in two by the sharp edge of a rock and his companions hear the youthful explorer's cry of dismay, followed by the usual silence. Three months later the young fellow appears among his friends, his pockets bursting with money. Now, what happened to him after the rope broke and in what manner did he acquire this wealth?"

"Well," the young author ventured hesitatingly, "I should say that when the rope broke, the explorer fell a considerable distance and struck at the bottom of the abyss upon his head. The compact caused him to see various wonderful stars and planets, and he was quick in seizing upon them before they could disappear. These he brought back with him, after finding an opening leading to the world, and sold them at a great price to a number of astronomers. Would that not explain matters satisfactorily?'

Puncturing His Pride.

Myrtle Dougherty looked at the young man with some apprehension. She had just looked at the clock.

"Algie," she remarked in her occasionally earnest way, "I really think you'd better go."

"Just because it's late?" he petulantly demanded.

"Not because it really is late, but because papa considers it late."

Algie McGosher laughed scornfully.

"I'm not afraid of papa," he said. "I've seen him. A little man like that has no terrors for the center rush of the old varsity team."

Myrtle's cheek grew pale.

"Don't talk like that, Algie. You don't know papa."

The confident youth inflated his chest.

"Papa doesn't know me," he chortled. "There'll be something doing when papa meets Algie. Papa mustn't get gay with the dynamite."

Myrtle came closer.

"Listen, Algie," she gravely said, "listen to a warning voice. You don't know that you are trifling with fate when you scoff at papa because he is small. For your sake I must lift the veil from the darkest period in our family history. Don't let papa get his hands on you. For ten years he was a boss piano mover!"

Algie sprang to his feet.

"Where's my hat?" he weakly gasped. And a moment later she heard his flying feet crunching the gravel.

The Tale That Taft Told.

While spending the winter in Georgia, before his inauguration as President, Mr. Taft went to the city of Athens to deliver an address to the students of the University of Georgia. He met a member of the faculty—a staunch Democrat—who said:

"Judge, I voted the Democratic ticket, but wanted to see you win."

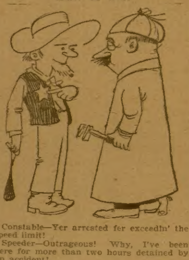
Judge Taft replied:

"You remind me of the story of Brer Jasper and Brer Johnson, who were both deacons in the Shilo Baptist Church, although avowed enemies.

"Brer Jasper died and the other deacons told Brer Johnson he must say something good about the deceased on Sunday night. At first he declined, but finally consented.

"Sunday night, when the time for the eulogy arrived, he arose slowly and said: 'Bredern and sistern, I promised ter say sump'n good 'bout Deacon Jasper tonight, an' I will say we all hopes he's gone whar we knows he ain't.'"

Law to Fit.



Constable—Yer arrested fer exceedin' the speed limit!

Speeder—Outrageous! Why, I've been here for more than two hours detained by an accident!

Constable—Then I'll hev ter jug yeh fer obstructin' a public highway.

Suspicious Occupation.

A man whose work ends at 2 a. m. was inspired by the spring atmosphere to take a stroll before going home to sleep. Near his house is a section where the houses are surrounded by large yards filled with flowers and shrubbery. It was in this section of beauty that the man chose to take his stroll, taking to himself an odor of refinement and intellectuality by inhalation.

He was strolling with a delicious, suspicious leisure when halted by a policeman with a query as to what he was doing there.

"Exercising my prerogative," replied the pedestrian, who really didn't see that it was any one's business.

"Ye're what?"

"Exercising my prerogative."

"Well, we'll see about that," said the cop. "You can come tell the lieutenant all about it."

Willingly the man went. The station was just far enough away to make his walk so much the more beneficial. Arrived there both he and the policeman told their stories.

"Exercising your prerogative?" asked the lieutenant with a smiling nod at the policeman. "Well, Mr. Man, that is all right when you address a lieutenant, but you deserve to be run in when you tell it to a policeman. He ain't no walking dictionary. Now go home, and another time kindly explain to a cop in language he will understand. Or carry a dictionary with you. Good morning."

Advice to a Baby.

Exercise systematically the muscles of the throat and lungs. Remember that for this purpose the night air is best.

Remember that bed clothes have but one use—to be kicked off. This exercise is also a fine preparation for football.

When being bathed suffer silently. There are some tortures that cannot even be expressed in yells.

Always keep in reserve a certain amount of strength for the time when your mother or the nurse is obliged to go out, thus leaving you alone with your father. At these periods you can show what you really amount to.

Regard all relatives with suspicion. But wear their clothes with complacency.

Insist upon being rocked to sleep every night. It will endear you more than ever to everybody.

When on a railroad train keep as quiet as the grave until everybody has settled down to a quiet ride and the serious old gentleman in the next seat has remarked that he never saw such a good baby. Then begin to stir and settle down gradually to a series of blood-curdling yells.

As you grow older and are taken out in your baby carriage try and break the springs by jouncing up and down. If you succeed you will begin to make your parents see that they might as well reconcile themselves to pay for your damages.—Life.

Told by Brewer.

Many are the incidents of Justice Brewer's life now being related. His fondness for upholding the virtues of the people of the West was illustrated by many of these. One of the stories Justice Brewer was fond of telling was used by him to show the high regard for the law in Kansas.

Justice Brewer related that a justice of the peace owned a farm in Kansas that bordered on Missouri. One day the justice was sitting on a fence, built directly on the State line, superintending some work his son and a farm hand were doing. The son and his companion engaged in a dispute which ended in a fist fight. The justice of the peace, Justice Brewer would explain, watched the encounter for a few minutes and then shouted in a loud voice:

"Gentlemen, in the name of the law of the State of Kansas and by virtue of my authority, I command you to desist."

"Just then the rail broke," continued Justice Brewer, "and the justice of the peace landed in Missouri. Arising to his feet he exclaimed:

"'Give him —— son; I have lost my jurisdiction.'"

What He Felt Like.

According to Eat-'Em-Up-Jack Abernathy that pair of young wolves he fathers are about as rugged youngsters of their age as may be found. The United States marshal of Oklahoma awaited his sons' arrival here the other day, on their horseback ride half way across the continent. Mr. Abernathy's localized embonpoint fairly throbbed with pride as he displayed their photographs and talked of their feats, says the Cincinnati Times-Star. "Temple"—he's the 6-year-old—"is a hot sport," said Marshal Abernathy. "He'll tackle anything and get up a-grinning. He has never been really thrown off a horse, but one time he was riding along at a good gallup and his horse shied. Temple's short little legs couldn't clutch the saddle, savvy? And Temple sticks his head in the sand.

"'How'd you feel when you got up, son?' I asked him.

"First thing,' says Temple, 'I wanted to ride that there horse. And I did.'

"'But how'd you feel, inside?' I asked.

"'Dad,' says Temple, very earnest, 'if I'd a-done what I wanted to do I'd a bit the ears offen that fool hoss.'"

She Lives in Bingville.

A south Missouri paper is carrying this ad: "Attractive woman, not a day over 30, would be pleased to correspond with eligible man. Not absolutely necessary that he should be young. Would prefer one with property, but one with a good paying position would be satisfactory. The young lady is of medium height, has brown hair and gray eyes, not fat, although, most decidedly, she is not skinny. Her friends say she is a fine looking woman. Object matrimony. Reason for this advertisement, the young woman lives in a little dinky town, where the best catches are the boys behind the counters in the dry goods and clothing stores, and every one of them is spoken for by the time he is out of short pants. Address Hazel Eyes, Box 23, Bingville, Mo."

Bad Humor.

Our idea of bum humorists includes those baseball fans who imagine they are doing something clever and original when they show their displeasure at the umpire by yelling, "Strike!" every time a perceptibly bad ball is pitched and "Safe!" every time a visiting player is thrown out by a city block. These jokers are on a par with the theatergoers who invariably applaud the boy who sweeps up the jig sand and carries out the preceding performers' props. This sort of humor must become exceedingly monotonous and flat to umpires and stage hands.

AGGRIEVED.

I care not e'en
  How fair she be,
If she's inclined
  To laugh at me.

Yet, if she would
  But laugh with me,
No other could
  More happy be.

For pride, you wis,
  Is not a myth;
Such difference
  'Tween "at" and "with!"

Took It for Granted.

He had been calling on her twice a week for six months, but had not proposed. He was a wise young man and therefore didn't think it necessary.

"Ethel," he said, as they were taking a moonlight stroll one evening, "I—er—am going to ask you an important question."

"Oh, George," she exclaimed, "this is so sudden! Why, I——"

"What I want to ask is this," he interrupted. "What date have you and your mother decided upon for our wedding?"

Unsatisfactory Route.

He had been calling on her twice a week for a month, when he thought it time to do a little investigating.

"Excuse me, Miss Clara," he said, "but can you—er—cook?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Greening," replied the fair maid, coldly, "but if you expect me to reach your heart through your stomach you are going to get left."

Naturally.

Lady—Can you direct me to a bargain sale, sir?

Politician—Are you looking for Senators or Representatives, ma'am?

Objected to the Kind.

Fanner—What did the umpire say when that wild-eyed center fielder tried to hit him with a bat?

Fannerly—Why, he said he didn't blame the man for trying to hit him, but he did object to the kind of bat he had selected for the job.

Fanner—What kind of bat was it?

Fannerly—A brickbat.

No Error, After All.

Irate Proprietor of Department Store—Say, what do you mean by advertising "bargains in shoes tomorrow?" We're not going to have a shoe sale on that date.

New Advertising Manager—I know you're not; but you're having a stocking sale today, and if some of those stocking bargains are not in shoes tomorrow I'll fire myself.

Heartlessness.

Mr. Binks (reading from newspaper)—The slaughtering of aigrettes has been so frightfully extensive that it is estimated these beautiful birds will be totally extinct within a very few years.

Mrs. Binks—What a pity that will be! Even now, aigrettes are dreadfully expensive.

Cook in Comfort You no longer need wear yourself out with the weakening heat of an intensely hot kitchen. You can cook in comfort.

Here is a stove that gives **no outside heat.** All its heat is concentrated at the burners. An intense blue flame (hotter than either white or red) is thrown upwards but not around. All the heat is utilized in cooking — none in outside heating.

New Perfection
WICK BLUE FLAME
Oil Cook-stove

entirely removes the discomfort of cooking. Apply a match and immediately the stove is ready. Instantly an intense heat is projected upwards against the pot, pan, kettle or boiler, and yet there is **no surrounding heat — no smell — no smoke.**

Cautionary Note: Be sure you get this stove—see that the name-plate reads "New Perfection."

Why? Because The New Perfection Oil Cook-Stove is scientifically and practically perfect. You cannot use too much wick — it is automatically controlled. You get the maximum heat —no smoke. The burner is simple. One wipe with a cloth cleans it — consequently there is no smell.

The New Perfection Oil Cook-Stove is wonderful for year-round use, but especially in summer. Its heat operates upward to pan, pot, or kettle, but not beyond or around. It is useless for heating a room.

It has a Cabinet Top with shelf for keeping plates and food hot.

It has long turquoise-blue enamel chimneys. The nickel finish, with the bright blue of the chimneys, makes the stove ornamental and attractive. Made with 1, 2 and 3 burners; the 2 and 3-burner stoves can be had with or without Cabinet.

Every dealer everywhere; if not at yours, write for Descriptive Circular to the nearest agency of the

Standard Oil Company
(Incorporated)

An Airship Mystery;

Or, The Strange Story of Gloria

BY WELDON J. COBB

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CHAPTER VI.

"GLORIA."

THE radiant young being upon whom Clyde Darrell gazed spellbound seemed to dissolve like a beautiful picture in the opaline moonlight, as a gentle voice called her from inside the house, and she disappeared in that direction.

"Gloria!" What a transcendent name and how it fitted this peerless beauty!

Never in his life had the eyes of Darrell viewed so charming, so striking a picture. Gloria was queenly. The pure profile was clear cut as steel. There was character in the face. There was magic, something in her bearing that suggested strength, determination, not a trace of weak impulse or careless caprice.

It was a face to worship, to dream over. Clyde Darrell might never view it again, but he had seen it once and he knew that he should see it until he died.

A rapturous, unnerving spell seemed cast over him. He drew away from the spot. He felt himself an intruder. A miracle thrall of new emotion seemed to shut out from his mind every sentiment except the conviction that he had met his fate, that here, at humble, secluded Rose Cottage, was the magnet that attracted and chained his soul.

Amid dense shrubbery he suddenly found himself in darkness. He appeared to have stumbled into a vine-clad trellis tunnel leading to a pagoda-like edifice, dimly outlined against the moonlit lawn. Thorny tendrils caught in his clothes. Once he stumbled over a box of earth and nearly fell. The place was so obscure he could not see his way out of the labyrinth into which he had blundered, and he flashed a match.

The glow showed Darrell a rounding, roofed-in space beyond him, and he stepped toward it. There was a broad rustic table, and it was littered with papers, books, and what seemed like blue prints and charts. The idea suggested to him was that some worker had his open air den here and had abruptly left his work as it stood temporarily.

Guided by the momentary illumination Darrell managed to round the table, and making out the entrance to the summer house, he stepped out upon the turf. He cast a last look toward the house, but intervening shrubbery shut out a clear view of the veranda, where he had seen the girl whom he believed to be Gloria Chester. His thought was to get out of the garden to some place where he could think out the situation. He knew now that he must return to the cottage at some time or other. He must view again the face of its peerless mistress, if only for a moment, if for the last time.

"Fire!"

Darrell turned sharply and uttered the word in a short, quick gasp. Then, like lightning he darted back into the summer house. He could pick his steps now, for the interior of the place was light as day.

In a flash the young man discerned what had happened. He had carelessly cast aside the match he had ignited and it had landed among some of the papers near the table. These had flamed up, they were burning fiercely now. In fact, before he could pounce upon them other heaps of documents, some lying in chairs, some in an open chest, had flared up.

"What have I done?" exclaimed Darrell ruefully. "They must be of value—this is unfortunate!"

With his hands he managed to beat out the papers that were burning in the chest. These seemed to be the most important. What looked more like refuse discarded papers, flaming fiercely, he kicked away from the table.

Darrell had burned his hands and they pained him. He was stamping out the last burning heap when a sharp challenge caused him to turn, startled and confused.

"What has happened here—who are you?"

A woman was framed in the moonlit doorway of the summer house. Singed and blinded, Darrell forgot discomfort and peril in an instant. He stepped beyond the table and respectfully, silently, stood staring at his challenger.

It was the same woman whom he had seen on the veranda of Rose Cottage not ten minutes previous. She was nearer now, and he could see her more plainly. Her deep dark eyes fascinated him. The play of the fleeting moonbeams over her opalesque face varied the most exquisite tints and gradations of emotions. She was superbly calm, yet her glance at the devastated papers showed a certain dismay, and it was apparent to Darrell that she regarded him with suspicion.

Darrell, attracted by so much beauty, embarrassed, too, at being discovered in the inexplicable dilemma of the moment, involuntarily stepped out into the moonlight. The eyes of the woman seemed to pierce him through and through. He felt their influence with a thrill, the cold misgiving of their challenge with something of trepidation.

"You have not answered me," again spoke the woman. It was the tone of one in customary authority. The voice was not harsh or severe, but steady and grave.

As the beautiful being stood confronting him she suggested to Darrell the lady queen of some lordly castle, the domain of which he had invaded.

"I am very sorry," he said, "but I fear I have been the innocent cause of trouble here, perhaps loss."

"Yes," answered the girl, and he fancied her lips quivered and her eyes showed a signal of positive distress as she glanced at the crisped and blackened documents within the summer house. "I fear you have done an irreparable injury."

"How irreparable?" exclaimed Darrell, quite startled.

"We will not discuss that," proceeded the girl. "I have asked you who you are?"

"I am Clyde Darrell, a mechanical engineer," replied the young man, flushing in an embarrassed way. "I came here—I mean I stumbled into the summer house quite by mistake."

"You are a stranger here?"

"Yes, madam."

Clyde Darrell was entirely truthful in his dealings with others. Every succeeding moment he was in the company of the peerless beauty now confronting him was an added joy to living and loving, yet he planned to get quickly away from the spot. His hostess was suspicious, challenging in her words and manner. Her dear eyes rested constantly upon him.

"You have not come here with any purpose regarding my father or those papers?" demanded the girl.

"I have never seen your father, I do not know what the papers are," replied Darrell.

"Can you absolutely assure me that you had no motive concerning any member of this household in coming to this place?" persisted his interlocutor.

Darrell hesitated, flushed. He could not tell a lie. He did not know how to evade the challenge direct. He fancied that the beautiful face of his companion grew suddenly cold and distrustful. With a queenly dignity that was commanding, she moved forward a few steps with a slight directing motion of the hand.

"I must ask you to come to the house and remain there until my father returns," she spoke.

Darrell bowed silently.

"He will require some explanation regarding those papers, for their loss is of serious moment to him."

Clyde Darrell did not pause to analyze the situation. For the life of him he could not resist the magnetic determination of the girl who swayed him to the most implicit obedience.

More than that, he was glad to follow her, to be with her, to feel the thrill and joy of her presence. And so he passed down the rose-fringed path, taking the first step in as strange and tragic an adventure as had ever fallen to the lot of mortal man.

CHAPTER VII.

SWEET LAVENDER.

Clyde Darrell followed his beautiful guide like a captive led in chains. He made no effort now to resist the magnetic influence of his hostess. In her royal beauty she was insistent, and Darrell realized that some motive other than hospitality or curiosity underlay her actions. He did not try, however, to analyze these at this moment. Circumstances had placed him in a peculiar position in which he felt himself disarmed, the mere plaything of fate. He bowed to the situation and awaited the ordeal.

Gloria Chester, for he felt certain that this was Gloria, led the way silently among the rare garden paths. She swept on like some unreal being, her soft skirts sweeping the dewy grass and the flowers, and the disturbed air was permeated with the acute scent of violet and rose and mignonette. In a dreamy, half-delightful maze Darrell followed her.

"Will you be seated, sir?" she said, as they reached the moonlit porch, and with a bow Darrell sank into an arm-chair, while his hostess, with a murmur of apology, passed him and went into the house.

There was a rustle, and a recumbent form in a lightly swaying hammock on the porch partially arose. The face was in shadow, but Darrell felt sure that this was Ruth Chester, the girl who was the indirect cause of his present appearance at Rose Cottage.

She seemed to be staring at him fixedly. Then there was a low sigh, and the girl sank back in the hammock again. The face of Darrell was presented full to the moonlight during the momentary inspection.

"She does not know me—she could scarcely recognize me," he murmured. "I am glad of that."

Suddenly the porch was flooded with new light. His recent hostess, entering the front room of the house, had lit a lamp. Its rays fell full and clear upon the recumbent figure in the hammock.

With a shock, and a great shock, Darrell regarded the child-woman lying there. He at once recognized the frantic girl of the mysterious old building in the city. So vivid was the recollection, that in an instant he seemed translated back to that tragic evening when he had seen the fragile, excited creature battering with dainty palms at the window panes, and with a thrill he remembered the words that had rung through his soul: "For the love of Heaven, come into this house!"

Darrell, however, was inexpressibly shocked. There was a great change in the girl since the occasion of her rescue. The wild-rose face was bloodless now, the cheeks sunken and wan. Her eyes were full of despair. As she lay there, a great wave of pity swept over his soul—she reminded him of a broken lily, prostrate and crushed after some devastating tempest that had changed a life of light and beauty into a wreck and heartbreak.

Then Ruth Chester, with a moan, turned her face away from the light. Darrell's glance was drawn irresistibly towards the interior of the house. He followed with his eyes the form flitting about in the room beyond. He saw his hostess arrange a chair near the light and place a newspaper on a little stand. Then she went to an old-fashioned cabinet in a corner of the room.

"Ah!"

A great aspiration came from the lips of the interested watcher. The lady had opened a drawer and clearly, unmistakably, Darrell saw her remove from the secretary a small glittering revolver. The next moment it was concealed in the folds of her dress.

Darrell regarded the girl in amazement. There was nothing about her that did not suggest attractiveness and gentleness of mind. Yet not a quiver of excitement or emotion crossed her face as she turned to leave the room. Then the thought came into Darrell's mind that she might entertain a dim suspicion that peril or plunder might menace the isolated home, and she was preparing to guard its security.

"If you will come in," she spoke, reappearing at the outer doorway, "you will find the evening paper, and I hope my father will soon return."

Darrell bowed courteously. He would far rather have remained in the outer air and near this beautiful thing. It was a rare delight to share her presence. The same insistency as before, however, showed in her eyes. He read unmistakably through her expression of face and actions that she was determined to practically hold him a prisoner until her father returned.

Darrell seated himself near the lamp and took up and unfolded the newspaper. He made a pretense of scanning its columns, but his mind was not in the effort. He was tensely nerved up by the startling occurrences of the past few moments. The present situation was a strong one, yet dubious.

He could hear the sisters on the porch ever and anon in low-toned conversation. The voice of Gloria was softly cadenced and soothing. That of Ruth was 'hushed' and broken, and remindful of sobbing and despair.

Ever and anon he caught a fragmentary strain of their talk. He heard the girl in the hammock ask:

"Who is the stranger, Gloria?"

"I do not know," was the reply, and it was rather anxious-toned, Darrell fancied. "Father will be greatly worried. Those papers are destroyed—the labor of years."

"But where is father?" inquired Ruth.

"That troubles me, too. It is so strange that he should leave the papers spread openly in the chest, that he should abandon them to any stray chance of discovery or destruction. I cannot understand it."

"I can only tell you," said Ruth, "as I told you before, that father was in the garden house. It was quite dusk. I heard him utter a great shout. He came running out onto the graveled walk, waving his hands excitedly and staring up at the sky."

"Staring up at the sky?" repeated Gloria marvellingly.

"Yes. From the shadow of the porch I could not see what he evidently saw. Then I heard him tear through the shrubbery away from the house and he disappeared."

"It is strange—passing strange," murmured Gloria. "Father has been more than usually abstracted of late. I know that he has some weighty care upon his mind."

It was some time later when Darrell caught another fragment of conversation from the porch.

"Father does not return, Gloria," he heard the girl in the hammock say wearily. "I believe I will go up to my room."

"Very well, dear," answered Gloria, "and try to get a lovely night's sleep. Why, you are getting stronger every day, darling."

A faint sigh was the only response. Assisted by Gloria the girl was led into the house and upstairs. It was some minutes before Gloria returned. She went out to the porch and sat there for nearly half an hour. All the time many sentient thoughts passed through the mind of her guest, perforce. Darrell wondered if it could be possible that the airship he had helped aloft could have been seen, had attracted the attention and lured upon its trail the father of the two girls at Rose Cottage.

Darrell glanced at the clock on the mantel. It was growing late. Suddenly he heard a footstep in the hall. Then Gloria Chester entered the room.

Her color heightened. He traced in the delicate depths of her clear, candid eyes a conception of the strained situation. He discerned also, however, that she was not the woman to shrink from an ordeal. She seated herself opposite to him and looked him frankly in the face.

"I must thank you for your kindness in remaining here," she began.

"I am only too glad to meet your wishes," said Darrell. These were all the lame words he could find to say, for her presence so disconcerted and thrilled him.

"I must apologize, too, for the peculiar position I have placed you in," continued Gloria. "You are a stranger here?" she inquired.

"Entirely so," admitted Darrell.

"Then I must explain to you that my father is an eccentric old man, pursuing an engrossing plan to which those burned papers appertain. My sister, whom you have just seen, has just come back to us an invalid. All the cares and responsibilities of the household rest upon me."

She was sweetly serious, but not boastful in her words.

"I understand," bowed Darrell, sympathetically.

"I fear to disturb the even tenor of my father's life, I dread any occurrence that may alarm him. I do not know where he has gone—his protracted absence is causing me some anxiety. He may not be back for some hours yet."

The speaker hesitated. Evidently she recognized Darrell as a gentleman, and apparently was reluctant to impart a hint of the suspicion his strange appearance had aroused.

"It must be irksome to you to be waiting so long," spoke Gloria after a pause. "I must ask you to be our guest for the night. Will you pardon my wayward fears that impel me to urge you to remain under our roof until my father sees you?"

"Not at all," responded Darrell freely. "Do not speak any further on the subject, Miss Chester. I see you are distressed. In whatever way I can be of service to you, command me."

She flashed to him a grateful glance, arose and left the room. A moment later an old woman, a servant, came into the apartment with a lighted lamp in her hand.

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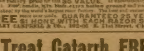

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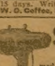

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Ice-water guzzling can be overdone.

Time, tide and gas meters wait for no man.

There are no weeds in the make-up of the grass widow.

A wise man consults his wife, then does as he thinks best.

Why not equip our legislative halls with immunity bathrooms?

Did you ever hear of a reformer who was willing to try it on himself?

If you are the first to discover your own mistakes you may hide them.

Occasionally we meet a man who is so honest that he attracts attention.

It's a pity we can't repair the damage as easily as we can make a break.

Gossips have automobiles beaten a block when it comes to running people down.

Perhaps more men would be honest if they were not ashamed of being poor.

Doesn't it sound funny when you hear of a milkman being on the water wagon?

There is hardly any more cause for the rabid unmuzzled dog than for the rabid chauffeur.

Remember, girls, that pinning a $17 hat on a 17-cent head doesn't increase the value of the head.

From woman's viewpoint, the age of discretion is reached when she begins to forget her birthdays.

Marriage is indeed a failure when love grows cold before the bride gets all the rice out of her hair.

They are going to raise the price of smoking tobacco, but corn silk is quoted at the same old rates.

The good may die young, but have you ever noticed how long a worthless man manages to hang on?

A crazy person thinks every one else is insane, and love is blind because it imagines everybody else is.

It's easy for a man to do things if given a chance, but the world applauds the man who makes his own chance.

Anyway, the aeroplane has put an end to the plaint of the mollycoddle who was always sighing for the wings of a dove.

Another nature faker has been discovered. In a magazine article he classifies suffragettes as members of the gentle sex.

About the first great disappointment a bride has is the discovery that her husband doesn't enjoy entertaining her relations.

Ever notice how the other fellow is applauded for saying the good things you might just as well have said had you only thought of them?

While flying is far from being a perfected means of warfare, it has gone so far that the natives of the world are thinking of fitting themselves up with bombproof umbrellas.

In Milwaukee the Socialist administration closed up 104 dives without any fuss. That was such a logical and sane thing to do that the city should not have had to go Socialist in order to do it.

(Continued from page five.)

"I will show you to your room," she said, and Darrell followed her. It was all coming out like a dream. He was puzzled yet attracted by the peculiar situation of the hour.

The servant ascended a flight of stairs, opened a door and handed him the lamp.

"Good night, sir," she said respectfully. "I hope you will sleep well."

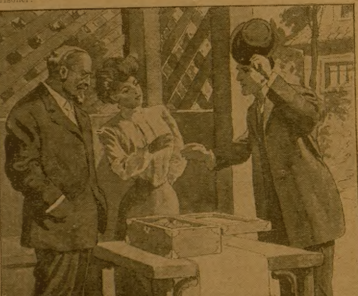
She closed the door after Darrell. He looked curiously about the apartment in which he found himself. The room was a model of neatness. The air was permeated with a delicious scent of sweet lavender. The furnishings were simple but immaculately suggestive of comfort.

There were two windows to the room. They were very narrow, and the apartment looked as if originally it had been constructed as a strong room for storage.

As Darrell placed a lamp on the stand he caught the rapid swish of garments in the hall without. Then there was a faint clink. It resembled the closing of a padlock in a hasp.

His instantaneous mental conclusion was irresistible. Under lovely guardianship, in an abode of beauty, innocence and peace—gentle hands, those of the peerless Gloria Chester had made him——

A prisoner!



Mr. Chester stood with furrowed brow.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NIGHT VIGIL.

Clyde Darrell smiled softly to himself and sat down in an old-fashioned rocking chair near the window for a few moments, thinking deeply and tenderly.

A man without a home, all this homelikeness about him, touched a gentle cord in his ingenuous nature. A man whose life had been spent in rough and ready communities on a foreign soil, the refinements of the present surroundings appealed to him powerfully.

In his heart of hearts he realized that he could ask no dearer boon than to cease his vagrant wanderings at this point. It was to him a paradise, and its angel to him was the peerless Gloria. Her earnest gravity inspired his respect, the pure fervent soul that shone from her magnetic eyes thrilled him now, even as a memory.

In a rapt and pleasing maze the young man sat like one involuntarily projected into a new phase of life. He felt that he could not sleep, and drawing nearer to the open window he looked out on the night.

"She is there," he uttered fervently, after one glance into the garden below.

He drew back in the shadow of the dainty white curtain and continued to gaze down. His hostess was slowly and rather anxiously and wearily, he fancied, pacing up and down a velvety patch of verdure at the side of the house.

The clear moonlight revealed her plainly as in a picture. Ever and anon she would pause and bend her ear at the slightest echo of a near or distant sound, striving to trace its source. In all this the silent and interested watcher could discern the guardian of the house, and those within it. She was his own gentle jailor, the devoted daughter awaiting some word from her absent father.

Nearly an hour passed by in this way. Finally Gloria disappeared for some minutes. When she came back to the spot she was accompanied by the old servant who had shown Darrell to his room.

Darrell could not hear the brief but earnest conversation that ensued between them. Evidently, however, Gloria was leaving the servant on guard while she, wrapping a light mantle about her, started away from the house.

"She has gone to seek her father," decided Darrell.

His mind wove a deep tangle of mystery and sentiment about the Chester family. He could not sleep, and sat gazing out upon the fair moonlight scene. The old servant had stationed herself in a garden seat, and Darrell concluded had been left as a substitute by Miss Chester to watch the house during her absence.

It was nearly two hours later when Gloria reappeared. Her light dress was torn with brambles and bedraggled with dew. She looked tired, disappointed and anxious.

"She has failed in her quest," decided Darrell, and his heart went out in pity toward the young girl upon whose shoulders seemed to rest the heavy responsibility of the family.

Gloria dismissed the servant. For some time she sat in the garden seat, her eyes shaded by her hand. Then as a distant bell in the village tolled the midnight hour, she arose, and Darrell watched her disappear around the corner of the house.

At first he supposed that she had decided that there was no chance of her father returning before morning, and that she had concluded that her guest would consider himself on a parole of honor and would not leave the house except on her permission.

Soon, however, he heard the creaking of the hammock on the porch, and this continued monotonously for a long time, and Darrell knew that the patient, lonely girl was still keeping up her loyal vigil.

He must have fallen asleep unknowingly after this, for suddenly he started up from the chair at the window, the full morning glare in his dazzled eyes.

Darrell was instantly conscious of the fact that he had been aroused from a deep sleep by the disturbing sound of human voices in the garden below.

Pressing his face to the lace curtain he made out Gloria, her arm wound affectionately about that of an austere, dignified looking man whom he decided must be her father, Mr. Chester.

The attire of the latter looked as if he had just concluded a long, arduous tramp, but his eyes were all sparkle and his face flushed with excitement. He seemed unnaturally contented with some powerful mental emotion, and he smiled fondly and happily upon his beautiful companion.

"It won't do, Gloria," he declared in tender, chiding tones. "You worry entirely too much over me."

"I could not help it, father, dear," replied his daughter earnestly. "Your absence was so unusual and unaccountable. I am so glad you are back home again in safety. Where have you been?"

"You must not ask me that, Gloria."

"Father!"

"No, at least not yet. It is nothing to trouble about—rather something to make us hopeful and delighted."

"What can you mean?"

"You know how long I have worked on the mystery of our missing fortune."

"Yes, father."

"Well, reward has come at last. Others may deem me a dreamer, but you know better, you have faith in me?"

"Always, father."

"For two years I have worked on the faint clew as to the whereabouts of the fortune. I have narrowed down my investigations to almost positive accuracy. But there was the means—the vehicle necessary to bring about ultimate results. I have now at least provided for that feature."

"I scarcely understand you, father."

"You shall know all about it soon," promised the old man. "Meantime, I must rest, I am pretty well tired out with my tramp. How is Ruth?"

"The same, father," replied Gloria sadly. "Oh! what is the dark spell that has come over her bright spirit, changing her from a joyful-hearted child into a crushed and broken creature?"

"The doctor says she is not well."

"No doctor can cure heartbreak, father," said Gloria, "and that, I am satisfied, is the matter with Ruth."

"Does she give no intimation of secret care or sorrow?"

"None. She smiles sweetly when I chide her, and never complains. Every day I see her fading away. Father, it is breaking my heart!"

"Poor dear—poor Gloria!" murmured the old man tenderly. "Perhaps Ruth needs a change of scene. We must speak to the doctor about it. Perhaps when she learns that the great fortune is within our grasp her spirits may revive. Come, child, let us go into the house."

"One moment first, father, please," said Gloria, her face becoming serious, almost frightened, the watching Darrell fancied.

She halted her father on his way to the house, and pleadingly, caressingly held to his arm and looked up into his face.

"What is it, Gloria?" asked Mr. Chester.

"Something has happened. I have something to tell you," continued his daughter.

"What has happened?" inquired Chester sharply, a trifle startled.

"A stranger came wandering around the grounds. In some way he came into the summer house where you study and work."

"He is a spy, some enemy," began Chester stormily.

"No, I think not," said Gloria. "He appears to be very much of a gentleman. He does not belong to Delamere. He may have had some purpose in coming to this place, but I cannot believe it is an unfriendly one to us or to our interests."

"I don't like it," muttered Chester, with frowning brows. "We have guarded our interests closely so far. Now, on the verge of success, we must allow no interference."

"An unfortunate thing accompanied the coming of this stranger, father," proceeded Gloria.

"What was that?"

"He seemed to have lost his way in the bower shrubbery. He was groping his way out in the dark and flared a match. He cast it aside carelessly. It fell into the chest of papers you seemed to have left open so carelessly, and they—don't get excited, father," pleaded the girl soothingly, "it was surely an accident, but the papers were destroyed."

"Destroyed! my life work!" shouted Chester wildly, his whole face bristling with dangerous rage and excitement. "An accident? Never! It is a plot! Quick, girl! where is this man?"

CHAPTER IX.

THE HIDDEN FORTUNE.

Clyde Darrell realized that the crucial juncture had arrived and that he must face an ordeal. He hurriedly made a brief toilet, as after a few words with her father, Gloria Chester led him to the summer house and then herself alone proceeded to the cottage.

He heard her steal up the stairs and almost noiselessly remove the padlock from the door of the chamber he had slept in. Then she knocked lightly. He feigned to move about, approached the door, and opening it confronted her.

Her color deepened as if she wondered if he realized that he had been a prisoner, her hand concealed the padlock in the folds of her dress.

"You must forgive me," she said, with a brave effort to appear calm and natural, "but my father has returned. I hope you will excuse him, too," she continued, as she led the way down the stairs. "He is very excitable at times. Please be patient with him."

"I hope he will overlook the serious damage I have occasioned through my carelessness," answered Darrell with genuine humility; for this fair girl bowed his soul to deep reverence if she did not thrill him when he was in her presence. "I hope he will show me some way to make amends for my blundering accident."

He could notice that his guide was perturbed and anxious as silently she led the way to the garden and to the summer house. Mr. Chester stood with furrowed brows and dejected eyes gazing down at the crisped, charred litter in the chest on the rustic table.

"Father," said his daughter, "this is the gentleman I told you about," and she turned as if to depart and evade the tenseness of a strained situation.

Daniel Chester flashed a quick glance across the young man's face. It expressed mingled wrath and suspicion, dying down to a sort of desperate irritation as he seemed to realize that the culprit was indeed a gentleman.

"Remain, Gloria," he said. "Be seated, both of you."

The daughter sank to a rustic bench. Darrell took its other end. The old man had arisen and was pacing restlessly up and down the floor of the summer house. He seemed to be in a reflective, undecided mood. Finally he spoke.

"You are responsible for this damage here?" he asked somewhat harshly, indicating the burned documents.

"To my great regret, yes," replied Darrell promptly and earnestly.

"How did it happen?"

Darrell told his story briefly but circumstantially. The old man never took his eyes off from him while he stroked his long white beard thoughtfully.

"You say you are a stranger in Delamere?" he inquired.

"Entirely so—almost so in the country. I have only very recently come from abroad. My name is Clyde Darrell. I have letters with me vouching for my respectability."

"I do not doubt that, sir," acceded Chester courteously, "but we are in a peculiar position here. You must be aware that my daughter has been strangely insistent in having you remain until I returned. That was right. We have reason to suspect spies and interlopers. I do not believe we classify you in that category. Your face reassures me. Still, we must be very careful. I cannot understand how you came to wander about our place here."

Darrell flushed. Now the grave searching eyes of Gloria were upon him also. He felt

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their magnetic influence without looking at her.

"I see that I have been a sad blunderer," he said evasively. "Believe me, sir, I would do nothing to harm you or yours. You force me to say it, sir—I felt it a pleasure and an honor to rest beneath your hospitable roof. A lonely world-wanderer, its pleaceful influences have made me think of the home I never had, of the mother I cannot remember."

Something in the pathos of his tone touched the old man, the girl, too. The former quickly extended his hand with the words:

"I trust you, Mr. Darrell. Gloria, you had better go to the house and get a little rest."

Darrell arose and bowed low and respectfully as the girl left the summer house. Then Chester waved him to the bench again.

"Tell me about yourself," he said, a strange speculative expression in his studious eyes.

Darrell related his brief life story. He did not mention the incident of the dismantled house in the city. He did, however, tell of how vague and indefinite were his business plans.

"I am going to make a confidant of you," spoke Chester, when Darrell had concluded. "I know not why, but something in your face, your words, your bearing inspires me with the confidence that you are a worthy man. If nothing comes of a certain proposition I may make, you will agree that it shall be under the seal of secrecy and strictly forgotten?"

"You have my sacred promise," said Darrell simply.

Chester came over to the bench and seated himself beside Darrell. He fixed his eyes upon him as he spoke, and his guest felt a certain weird influence of the strong personality of a man who suggested to him a dreamer, but one with a peculiarly powerful will. The story told by Chester was brief. It seemed that years before he and his brother had been bankers. From a small beginning, they developed a leading financial business of the district. They had a partner—Chester did not name him—but at every necessary allusion to this individual his eyes blazed and his frame seemed racked with violent internal emotion.

This partner it was discovered was a scoundrel. He had planned to wreck the bank, to loot the vaults and fly to a foreign country with his spoil. The plot failed, for the brothers discovered it. Ernest Chester, however, disappeared. When Daniel Chester came to look over the finances of the bank, he found money and securities exactly enough to pay off every depositor and every liability and his own original investment, and no more.

Some two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in currency had disappeared. It represented the surplus of the bank. This belonged to the brothers. Daniel Chester could not understand why his brother had gone away like a thief with their own money.

The man who had hoped to rob the bank, discovered, had taken his investment in the business and disappeared. Daniel Chester closed out the business. Then he set out to explore the mystery of the startling disappearance of his brother.

He found no trace of him, but one day a few weeks later, there came to him a letter in the handwriting of his brother. It bore the postmark of San Francisco.

It proved to be a hasty, incoherent scrawl, and ran about as follows:

"Still fearful of the man who has tried to ruin and rob us. Is he still on our track? Have thought of a new place where I can hide the money. Home soon. Must first get the money where the scoundrel cannot reach it. Leave here for a new point tonight."

"The moment I received that letter," narrated Chester, "I realized the facts of the case. My brother had been always a nervous, timid, confiding man. I had seen at the first that the shock of discovery of the duplicity of our dishonest partner had jarred his intellect. He had become seized with an uncontrollable terror, and his discovery and fears had preyed upon his mind. He had taken the box containing our fortune, the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and was wandering all over the country, afflicted with the delusion that our old partner was pursuing him, trying to get it away from him. In fact, he was out of his mind. I at once started out detectives to try and locate him."

"And did they find him?" inquired the interested Darrell.

"They were entirely unsuccessful in their search," replied Mr. Chester. "Nearly two months went by. Then I received a telegram from an isolated town in New Mexico, where my brother had died in a hospital. I went thither at once. There was not much to learn, outside the fact that my brother had been found roaming the streets, ragged, attenuated, penniless, but raving wildly of untold wealth safely hidden away, while he gloated and triumphed over the fact that he had foiled a wicked enemy who had sought to wrest the fortune from him."

"And there was no trace to the missing money?" asked Darrell.

"A trace, a clew, yes," answered Chester, "and that only. A sealed envelope addressed to myself was found on the body of my brother. I brought his body home. Since that day all my time, efforts and means have gone to unravel the mystery of the hidden fortune."

"Hidden?" repeated Darrell.

"Yes," was the amazing reply. "As surely as I am here, I feel certain, I feel positive that somewhere west of here, remote from civilization, impregnable, guarded by dangerous crags and ravines, secure forever from the reach of the average man—on some lonely mountain peak, rests the missing fortune of over a quarter of a million of dollars."

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A CONFESSION.

It isn't for her lovely eyes
  I love her, I am sure;
They are not bright, nor of a size
  To make her look demure.
Nor is it by her wondrous hair
  She holds my heart in thrall—
It neither is beyond compare,
  Nor beautiful at all.

Still less I love her for her lips,
  They're far from cherry red;
Nor do they form a sweet ellipse,
  As poets oft have said.
As for her mouth, and nose, and chin,
  They set me not adaze,
And I'd be guilty of a sin
  If I should sing their praise.

As far as money is concerned,
  She's poorer than myself;
Though Mammon I have never spurned,
  I love her not for pelf.
Why should I hold this girl above
  All other charmers? Well,
Like every other man in love,
  I'm sure I cannot tell.

HIS LITTLE GIRL.

The white-haired lawyer looked up from the statement on his desk, and stared at the drawn face of the man before him.

"Does this disclose a correct state of affairs?" he sternly asked.

"Absolutely!" returned the man wearily. "We have been barely solvent the last two years."

"And you have let the woman who is gone and the little girl continue to live in a fool's paradise?"

The other said nothing.

"I note here an item of one hundred and fifty dollars recurring every month as having been paid to the deceased," said the old gentleman. "Where is the figure for your salary?"

"You will not find it!" The answer came haltingly.

"I also note three or four items, amounting in all to seven hundred and fifty dollars, as having been paid to credit by a certain 'J. L.' Who is 'J. L.?'"

The man continued to stare at a worn patch in the carpet. The old lawyer took off his gold-rimmed spectacles, and proceeded to polish the lenses with his handkerchief.

"You understand, Lumley," he said quietly, "the affairs of the young lady are in my hands, and I have to ascertain the exact position. I am dependent on you for certain explanations, and I am sure you will assist."

James Lumley nodded.

"Very well," went on the lawyer. "Let us review the facts. Five years ago John Dodson died in harness, so to speak, and his widow decided to carry on the business. Knowing you to have been the right hand of her husband, conversant with his methods, the management of the business naturally devolved on you. You had been with John Dodson for many years."

"He took me as a boy just from school," James commented.

"Exactly! He and his family had taken to you. You had the trade at your fingers' ends. There was no man better fitted to carry on the business. It was sound. Dodson had drawn a certain sum regularly from the profits; no reason existed for this arrangement to be varied under the proprietorship of the widow. I turn to the early pages of your book, and find a very satisfactory state of affairs. But later on—say a year—I note the income has begun to fall off, and this retrogression has persisted until today we reach a level of something like half the former receipts. The business has gone back badly, that is evident; but, right up to the death of the widow, I find the monthly amount of her drawing regularly appearing. What I fail to find for the past three years is the weekly salary item of fifteen dollars for yourself, and I do not understand these various amounts paid into credit by 'J. L.'"

"It was an old debt paid by installments."

The lawyer looked up from the book, and regarded him searchingly.

"Yes," he said. "And the amounts for salary—were they applied to discharge the same debt?"

James Lumley threw out his hands.

"Is there any need for this?" he cried.

The man of law sat with finger tips pressed together.

"In half an hour Miss Dodson is coming here to learn exactly how her affairs stand," he returned. "I have to give her a full explanation. I want you to give me a clear perception, for her sake. Come, now, tell me all about it!"

"What is there to tell?" the young man cried. "The record of failure is in the books. There is nothing to say, except that I have done my best, and am sorry."

The laywer shook his head.

"The girl will want to know more than that," he murmured. "And it is her due."

For a time the man sat, with his gaze again on the carpet. Then he rose, and paced the room.

"A record of failure!" he muttered. "I have persistently fought, but the odds have been too heavy. I wonder if you'll understand when I tell you that I'm glad she who has gone never learned that anything was wrong, never guessed but that the business was flourishing."

"I understand," the lawyer said. "Tell me all about it."

"He took me as a boy, and taught me everything I know of the business. I did my best, because I wished to show him that I was worthy. He made me free of his home. The kindness of his wife instilled within me an abiding affection. I learned to know and love the little girl. She was of my age, capricious, and pretty, teasing and tender by turns, and I was her big brother.

"Some day—when she was a woman and I a prosperous man—the little girl and I were going to be married. So she often laughingly assured me, and the hope was a constant spur urging me to prove worthy. Through all the passing years that brought me to young manhood and the little girl to blossoming womanhood, the crowning reward of my achievements lay in the fulfillment of that promise.

"The growing reserve that comes with the passing of childhood, the sense of new power, and the fresh outlook on life that arrives with Maytime of a woman's existence, were with Mary as with other girls—opening up a new and delightful world. Her life became a round in which I had no place. I was her father's hand, tied to my duties. She visited the shop but seldom, and when she did, 'twas no longer 'Jim,' but 'Mr. Lumley.' It seemed that the woman had forgotten the promise made in girlhood or regarded it as childish play.

"Not so with me! The desire to win and hold her but strengthened with the years. This held me constant in endeavor. Before me was the goal of a future partnership or the prospect of being my own master. For this I worked and saved. Some day, when I had reached her level, I meant to remind the little girl of her promise.

"At twenty-five I had made myself competent to carry on the business myself. During his last year, the old gentleman was frequently ailing, and added responsibility became mine. I count it no credit, but the knowledge of the trust and esteem has helped me many a time in the dark days, and has stimulated me to renew the fight against the odds. He knew—my kindly old master—that I was fitted. He knew that I would do my best. And so I have.

"When full control was offered me by the sorrowing widow I took it gladly. The limited income they had hitherto enjoyed should be increased. My work should be a labor of love, which, in due time, should have its reward.

"For this I strove unceasingly, untiringly, bringing to bear on my intent the knowledge I had gained and the vigor of youth. In those days I would have laughed at the possibility of failure as at a jest. The future promised gladly. Mary, although not lacking for admirers, I believed to be heartwhole. No man ever took up a trust with greater confidence in himself.

"And for a time everything went swimmingly. In thirty years the house had gained a wide reputation for integrity. The best trade of the district was ours. Competitors, from time to time, had endeavored to wrest a share of the business from us, and, sooner or later, had failed in the fight for lack of support.

"I imagined that I could gauge exactly the limits of any competition, and could effectively cope with it. But I was to be disillusioned. In an evil day the agent of the capitalist proprietor of a hundred stores throughout the country spied out the land, and one morning I awoke to the fact that 'Smart's Emporium' was open but two doors away.

"From the first I realized that I was in for a stiff fight. This man, buying, as he did, enormous quantities on preferential terms, could well afford to cut prices as against the single shop owner, and yet maintain his average of margin. I fought him hard, but he had the advantage all along. If I came down to his prices he could go a little lower, and in certain lines I was forced to follow or lose customers, even though the transactions meant no profit. I was compelled to buy larger quantities, and on one occasion was bitten by falling markets. The sales diminished, the profits fell off. The business came, at last, to produce less than the expenses.

"I did not worry the woman who trusted me. It was my fight, and I was determined to win. In five years I had fought every inch. The sequel is in the sheet before you. Dodson's is still sound. The amount of the monthly expense has been regularly paid, but the day when the tale of my failure must have been told could not be long deferred.

"If you could know the harrowing dread of my nights during the past few months at the nearing certainty of that revelation, I think you would realize something of my thankfulness that she did not live to learn. There remains—Mary."

He paused and stood with clinched hands as if incapable of further utterance.

"You will tell her, sir, that Dodson's is still sound," he faltered presently; "but for a time, she must be content with less. I think we have touched the low-water mark. We have still many loyal customers who swear by us. The rest is dogged work."

The old lawyer gravely inclined his head.

"Thank you, Lumley!" he said softly. "I quite understand. In a few minutes Mary will be here. Will you call again in half an hour?"

* * * * * * * *

Jim stood by the door of the office, gazing at the face of the little girl as she sat in the chair by the desk. At his entrance the old lawyer took off his glasses, and applied himself to another polishing process. For some reason, when he spoke his voice was curiously subdued.

"Lumley, I have fully explained the position," he said. "It is for Miss Dodson to say what is to be done."

The girl rose and confronted him. He fancied that her face was unusually white. Although she was smiling, he could see that in her eyes showed the glimmer of moisture. She came toward him with outstretched hands.

"We mustn't let the old name sink into oblivion, Jim," she said. "There's a matter of ten or eleven thousand dollars—mostly insurance. I'm coming to help. If you will have me as a partner, 'J. L.,' I'm coming to assist you at the store."

The Change.

The Beggar—I was not always like this.

The Victim—No, last week you were lame in the other leg.

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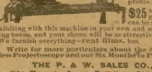

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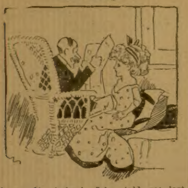


Gwen—Oh, father! John told me last night that he would die for me.
Father—Marry him! Any man who would say that could not kick on your cooking.

More Appropriate.

"What name?" asked the police magistrate, as the rich motorist was brought up for speeding.

"John Doe," laughed the offender, "and I am a millionaire."

"You are, eh? Then I'll put it down John Dough."

The Common Type.

"I suppose," said the fair summer girl to the itinerant photographer who was plying his trade at the seaside resort, "you are a good judge of human nature?"

"Well," he replied, cautiously, "I have many opportunities of observing it."

"Would you mind telling me," she continued, "what you consider the most common type of women?"

"The tintype, ma'am," he answered unhesitatingly. "Four for a quarter."

Speaking From Experience.

There was a family reunion down at the Smith house and little Tommy Smith had been kissed by no less than seven aunts.

"Gee whizz!" he pouted as he took refuge in the cellar, "der's no doubt about it."

"No doubt about what?" asked his chum.

"Why, that this here aunty-kissing business is a nuisance."

A Good Guesser.

Short—I say, old man, can you let me have $5 for a few days?
Marks—Sure. Here you are.
Short—Do you know why I always come to you for a loan?
Marks—No; I give it up.
Short—That's it, exactly.

Suitable Pet.

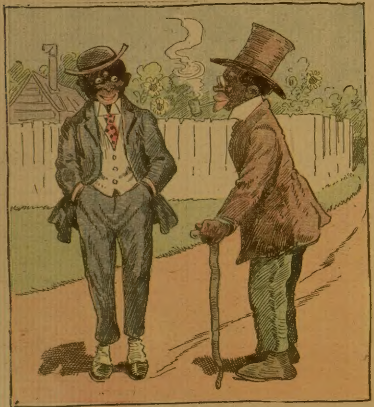
The dog fancier gazed upon the odd-looking bulldog in the third cage.

"A queer animal," he commented. "He has a crooked tail, crooked ears, crooked toes and crooked legs. The crookedest brute I've ever had in stock."

"Got an order for him?" asked the friend.

"Oh, yes. One of those grafting politicians has ordered him."

A GRAVE ERROR.



Sambo—Mistah Henpeck done made a scene at his muddah-in-law's goin' away yistahday.
Lambo—Sho! Go way!
Sambo—Yessah. He done fo'gts hisself an' lets er onion drap out of his handkerchief.

Embarrassing.

"Myrtilla," said the stern father at the breakfast table, "what line of goods does that young salesman represent?"

"He—he sells automobiles," faltered Myrtilla, glancing out of the window.

"He does, eh? Well, I thought perhaps he sold face powder. I saw a sample on his arm when he left last night."

And poor Myrtilla blushed redder than the strawberries.

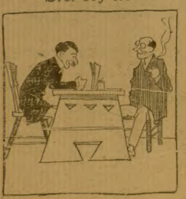
Frequent Passes.

"Town council met down in the hall last night," announced the old storekeeper at Bacon Ridge.

"That so?" rejoined the starch drummer. "Did they pass any measures?"

"Yes, a quart measure of cider was passing pretty lively all through the meeting."

Ever Try It?



H. Spoke—You are looking very cheerful, old man.
S. Broke—Yep; we got a measles sign on our door and the collectors are afraid to come in.

Seemed to Be in Line.

The small boy was leaning up against the wall, sobbing bitterly.

"Cheer up, my little man," said a passer-by. "What's the use of worrying? You may be President some day."

"S-say," sobbed the little fellow, "it s-sure do l-look as if I wus h-headed dat way; somebody's allers a-roastin' me!"

Was Merely Thinking.

The dealer in antiques looked hurt. "You act as if you doubted my assertion that these andirons were three hundred years old," he said, reprovingly.

"Pardon me," explained the customer with a polite sneer, "I was merely thinking they were not very tall for their age."

What Really Costs.

The international marriage had just been pulled off in grand style.

"I suppose," said the friend of the family, "the cost doesn't count in a case of this kind."

"Oh, no," rejoined the billionaire father of the bride. "It's the count that costs.

Then He'd Get His.

Mrs. Peckem—Henry, what punishment should be meted out to a man who proposes to a woman and then refuses to marry her?

Peckem—He should be compelled to marry her.

Fully Qualified.

The invalid was on the road to recovery and the physician had just presented his bill for $700.

"Doctor," said the patient, "you missed the opportunity of your life. You should have been a nerve specialist."

CHANGE

Quit Coffee and Got Well.

A woman's coffee experience is interesting. "For two weeks at a time I have taken no food but skim milk, for solid food would ferment and cause such distress that I could hardly breathe at times, also excruciating pain and heart palpitation and all the time I was so nervous and restless.

"From childhood up I had been a coffee and tea drinker and for the past 20 years I have been trying different physicians but could get only temporary relief. Then I read an article telling how some one had been cured by leaving off coffee and drinking Postum and it seemed so pleasant just to read about good health I decided to try Postum in place of coffee.

"I made the change from coffee to Postum and such a change there is in me that I don't feel like the same person. We all found Postum delicious and like it better than coffee. My health now is wonderfully good.

"As soon as I made the shift from coffee to Postum I got better and now all of my troubles are gone. I am fleshy, my food assimilates, the pressure in the chest and palpitation are all gone, my bowels are regular, have no more stomach trouble and my headaches are gone. Remember I did not use medicines at all—just left off coffee and drank Postum steadily."

Read "The Road to Wellville," found in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Could See His Finish.

The old uncle returned from the sea just about the time his nephew returned from college, after being hazed and initiated into a dozen class societies.

"Maria," said the old man in astonishment, "where has Charles been?"

"He's been to a finishing school, James," responded Charles' mother.

And then Uncle James took another look at the court plaster, the bandages and the black eye and drawled:

"Finishing school, eh? Well, they certainly must have tried to finish Charles the first season."

FREE ASTHMA AND HAY FEVER CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Mary's, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma and Hay Fever in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write him for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

Why Boys Are Brave.

To his teacher's request that he give the class ideas on the subject of "Bravery," little Johnny delivered himself of the following:

"Some of the boys is brave because they always play with little boys, and some boys is brave because their legs is too short to run away, but most boys is brave because somebody's lookin'."

Pa's Idea of It.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is culture, anyway?
Pa—Culture, my son, is a woman's ability to smile naturally when a waiter spills gravy down the front of her dress at a dinner party."

A Feminine Jolt.

Bess—I sometimes wish I might see myself as others see me.
Nell—Oh, you poor dear! Why, you just couldn't believe your eyes!

He Got Another Job.

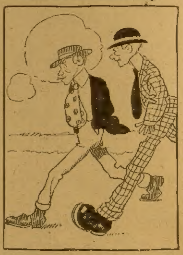
"We make it a rule here," said the warden to the new prisoner, "to assign prisoners to the trades with which they are most familiar, and will make no exception in your case. What is your occupation?"

"I am an aeroplane chauffeur," replied the new boarder, as he grinned a grewsome grin.

A Double Vacation.

Mrs. Neighbors—I haven't seen anything of your wife for a couple of weeks. Is she out of town?
Crosslots—Yes; she's passing her vacation in the country.
Mrs. Neighbors—Indeed! And when do you take your vacation?
Crosslots—Oh, I'm having mine now.

Just Start Something.



Cobbe—Her father told me to cease calling or he'd kick me all over the piazza.
Briar—He's a kind hearted man, do you know it?
Cobbe—Call that kind?
Briar—Certainly; lots of men wouldn't warn you at all.

Practical Demonstration.

"Yes, my little boy," said the pretty settlement worker, "good behavior always pays."

"That's what me dad says," responded the tough lad in the blue overalls. "He's doing time an' gets two months off every year for good behavior."

ANOTHER TESTIMONIAL.

Said the rusty hobo,
  As he sat on the garden wall,
And ate and ate
From the farmhouse plate,
  "'Tis de farmer dat feeds us all!"

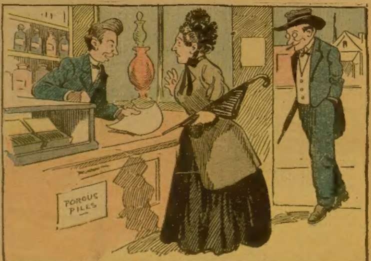
Of Course.

Joax—I dreamed last night that a burglar stole our new golden clock. When I woke up I got up to see if it was still there.
Hoax—Was it gone?
Joax—No; but it was going.

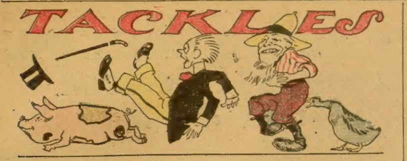
Vegetable or Mineral.

"Isn't her hair carroty?"
"Carroty! It's gold."
"Gold! It's carrots."
"Sure! It's gold—eighteen carats."

FORCE OF HABIT.



The Druggist's Wife—I'm looking for the proprietor. Is he in?
The New Clerk—No, madam; but we've got something just as good.



Trials of Sudden Wealth.

Mrs. Gaswell—It just makes me mad. Here I go out shopping in my five-thousand-dollar Worth dress, and just loaded with diamonds, yet folks think I'm poor.

Mr. Gaswell—They does?

Mrs. Gaswell—Yes, they do. I went into Antique, Design & Co.'s grand store today, to get some furniture for the new house, and at first they didn't show me anything but a lot of second-hand stuff that looked as ef it ud come over in the ark.

Calm Consideration.

Bright Child—Grandpa, you used to live in Philadelphia, didn't you?

Grandpa—Yes, my dear.

B. C.—Well, there's something in the paper about a gravity railroad that Philadelphia is thinking about having in the park. Shall I read it to you?

G.—No, my dear, I read all about that when I was a boy.

In a Hurry.

He (anxiously)—What did your father say?

She (sweetly)—Nothing, except that he would look you up and see if you had enough income to support a wife.

He—H'm! My dear, hadn't we better elope tonight?

A Hustler.

Charitable Person—I thought you were blind.

Beggar—Well, cap, times is so hard just now and competition is so keen that even a blind man has to keep his eyes open nowadays if he wants to do anything at all.

Why He Was Locked Up.

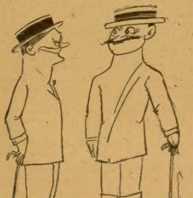
"Ever been locked up?" demanded counsel.

"I have been," admitted the witness.

"Aha! And what had you been doing to get yourself locked up?"

"I had been doing jury duty."

Position.



Scroggs—I'm doing very well, I have twenty men under me now.

Briggs—Huh! That's nothing, I have over a thousand. I'm on the tenth floor in our building, see?

Sordid Philosophy.

Maude—Poor Jeannette! Her marriage was disappointment to her friends!

Clara—Married beneath her socially, I suppose?

Maude—Oh, no; but her friends all predicted the alliance would turn out unhappily, and it didn't.

The Other Way About.

Wife—The landlord was here today, and I gave him the rent and showed him the baby.

Husband—Next time he comes around, just show him the rent and give him the baby.

WHOLE ORCHESTRA.

This musical genius can make lots of noise,
Since married—but here is the riddle—
He blows his own horn when he's out with the boys,
But at home he must play second fiddle!

A New Experience.

New Arrival (in barber's chair)—Begorra, phwat's thot y'r doin', now?

Barber—I've been shaving your neck, sir.

New Arrival—Moy! moy! Do ye shave a man all over in this country?

A Beauty Secret.

"What do you do to keep your hands so beautiful?" asked the rural maid.

"Why," replied the fair summer boarder, "I do nothing."

Liberty's Limitations.

Immigrant—At last I am in free America. A man can do pretty much as he pleases in this country, can't he?

Native—Y-e-s; unless he's married.

Useless Law.

"The copyright law is nothing but a hold-up game on the part of the Government," remarked the would-be humorist.

"Why," rejoined the writer who had arrived. "I thought it an excellent law."

"Well, it isn't," answered the other. "Why, I never copyright my jokes, and no one ever steals them."

By the Sad Sea Waves.

The beautiful girl was furious.

"You base deceiver," she hissed as she emerged from the ocean, "you have been teaching some other girl to swim!"

"On my word, I have not" replied her fiance.

"Then how did this blonde hair get on your bathing suit?"

"Blonde hair? Oh, that is easily explained. I guess it came out of the combers, my dear."

What He Required.

"Why don't you go to work?" asked the kind lady.

"I would, ma'am," replied the husky hobo, "ef I had de material and de tools."

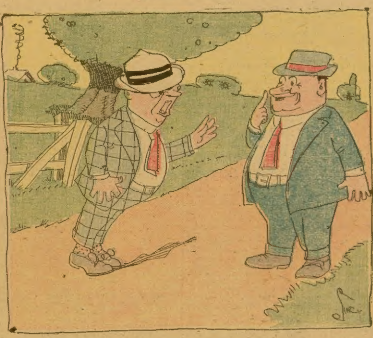
"What tools and material do you require?" queried the k. l.

"A knife and fork an' some food," answered the h. h.

WOMAN'S SPECIALTY.

No woman can expect to be
A lawyer of renown;
She can't take up the law, for she
Likes most to lay it down.

SHORT CUT



Friend—But you cannot walk like old man Weston. The idea of betting a thousand that you can walk from ocean to ocean in a month!

Pedestrian—'Sh! I am going down on the Isthmus of Panama.

Beats Chewing the Rag.

"What are you chewing?" asked the fair maid in the hammock.

"Gum arabic," answered the young man in the rustic chair.

"Gum arabic?" she echoed in surprise.

"Yes," he rejoined. "I expect to visit Western Asia this fall and I'm trying to learn the language."

Suburban Strategy.

Gunner—How in the world did you coax Closeman to let you have the use of his new lawnmower?

Guyer—It was easy. I started my old, squeaky mower about 6 a. m. and it aroused Closeman from his morning nap.

Right in the Solar Plexus.

Woodby Bright—What's—er—on your mind, Miss Helen?

Helen Whack—Oh, nothing. I was just thinking of you.

Only a Partial Loss.

Mrs. Northside—Is it true that your little boy has lost his voice since his recent illness?

Mrs. Crosstown—Not entirely, but his voice has been reduced considerably. When he is carrying on a conversation with other boys now you can't hear him for more than five blocks.

The Final Prize.

Gunner—I see where an English cigarette company is offering a tombstone for the return of 10,000 coupons.

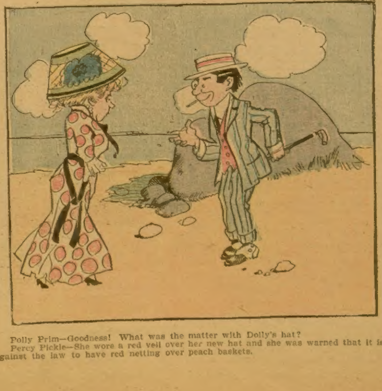
Guyer—H'm! I guess any smoker that got away with 10,000 packs would need a tombstone.

Theory vs. Practice.

Singleton—Do you believe in the old adage about marrying in haste and repenting at leisure?

Wedderly—No, I don't. After a man marries he has no leisure.

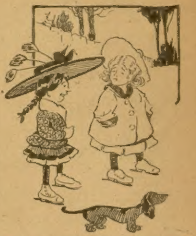
ANNOYING IGNORANCE.



Polly Prim—Goodness! What was the matter with Dolly's hat?

Percy Pickle—She wore a red veil over her new hat and she was warned that it is against the law to have red netting over peach baskets.

A Hot One.



Edith (aged 8, boastfully)—My mother's fan is hand painted.

Ethel (aged 9)—Yes, an' so is your mother.

Paradoxical.

Bobby Smart—Papa, I've made a great discovery.

Smart Sr.—Well, what is it?

Bobby Smart—I've found out that the heavy end of a match is the light end.

THE YELLOW FLY.

There are butterflies and butterflies,
Alas, it makes us sigh;
'Tis only at our boarding house
We see the butterine fly.

Juvenile Logic.

Little Lola—Why does Uncle Jack have "L. L. D." on his cards after his name?

Little Elmer—Oh, I guess he's going to be a lung and liver doctor.

The Only Way.

Her Brother—What is the best way to win a woman's love?

His Sister—Her way, of course.

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By the Sad Waves.

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"My father has been a sufferer from sick headache for the last twenty-five years and never found any relief until he began taking your Cascarets. Since he has begun taking Cascarets he has never had the headache. They have entirely cured him. Cascarets do what you recommend them to do. I will give you the privilege of using his name."—E. M. Dickson, 1120 Resiner St., W. Indianapolis, Ind.

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The Girl and a Million;

Or, THE CROOKED LEGISLATOR

By Alfred C. Tozer

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CHAPTER XV.

COMMANDS OF SOCIETY.

"PARDON me," said Duke, "if I fail to comprehend your present attitude toward the girl. I thought you were her friend."

"She presses the endurance of those who know her to the breaking point," said the banker's wife. "This second escapade places her without the pale."

"I'm sorry," replied Duke, "yet I must find some way to bring her back. Darling came down on the train from Manton with me. He said that Louise was well and in good spirits a week ago. Do you think I can depend on him to help me bring her back?"

"I don't think Darling will assist you," replied Mrs. Hill, gravely. "I believe he knows where she is."

"It is a pity that you can't forget your thirty-nine articles of conventionality," said Duke, "and show your tolerant heart again. I think you might help me if you would."

"Yes," replied the old lady, slowly, her eyes resting tenderly on the young man's face, "I think I might help you, if you would let me. But the way to help you now is to turn you away from this mad search for Miss Hilton. She ought to come back of her own accord. She owes it to her reputation to come back and explain why she has, for the second time, left her relatives and friends and lost herself in the slums. She owes that much to the friends who have stood by her so loyally."

Duke arose and moved toward the door, his lips set in rigid lines of protest against this arraignment of the girl he loved. Mrs. Hill put out a hand.

"Wait!" she cried. "Don't you dare to leave me in anger. You ought to know that I have only your good at heart. Come here and sit down again. I have faced insane lovers before and am not afraid!"

"I am not angry," replied Duke. "I appreciate all you have done for Louise. I admit your right to criticize her acts, but I would rather not listen to you doing it. I know that society speaks through you, and my world is falling. When I bring her back as my wife, believe me, I shall not bring her here to be questioned and insulted. I don't like your thirty-nine articles, Mrs. Hill."

"I don't defend all the thirty-nine articles of society," said the banker's wife. "I can't say that I quite approve of every one of them, but, for all that, I know that they must be obeyed. You will appreciate this fact if you bring Louise back to Harlan, even as your wife. I'm afraid that society will discipline her for her defiance of its dearest tenets. I'm sorry to say this, Duke. You know that I have done what I could for the child, what I could for you, but I really cannot take her back, unless it can be shown that she went away properly chaperoned. I can't endure another incident like the one when she was turned out of the restaurant and arrested on the public street. How do I know that the waiter and the detectives were not right in what they said and did? Oh, Duke! Give it all up!"

"Don't!" cried Duke. "You are destroying my faith in the charity of womankind. Think of the girl, alone and in trouble, and pity her."

"Go back to your newspaper," replied the banker's wife, "and forget her."

As they stood there looking into each other's eyes, the man resolute and defiant, the woman all gentleness in her delivery of the edicts of society, Duke thought he had never before seen exactly that look upon the face of the banker's wife. Was it the late vigil, or was it the trouble of the time, that was spreading that gray tinge over her kind old face.

"The very last time we met in this room," continued Duke, "you commended me for my loyalty, praised me for my devotion, applauded me for defending the character of a woman in her absence. I can't understand what has changed you so, but I am quite certain that I do not care to bring my wife into the land of the thirty-nine articles. Good night, and thank you for all you have done for Louise."

Duke smiled and reached forth his hand, but they were not to part so, for the telephone bell rang as he passed through the hall, and in a moment he heard Mrs. Hill's voice calling to him to come back, and saying that Mr. Darling was on the wire. When he reached her side he found her with the receiver to her ear, saying:

"I'm sorry, more sorry than I can tell you, but she has not communicated with me, except on the occasions you know of. Duke? Yes, he is here. Was just going away in a tantrum. Yes, I'll call him to the 'phone."

"Hello!" came Darling's voice over the wire. "Why didn't you tell me about it on the train?"

"To tell the truth," answered Duke, "I thought you knew more about the matter than I did, and did not care to discuss it with me."

"You were mistaken," replied Darling. "Are you coming down to the hotel? I will wait for you in the lobby if you are."

Duke hung up the receiver and turned to Mrs. Hill.

"You see how it is," he said. "Darling knows nothing of her. What next?"

"There can be no next for me," replied Mrs. Hill, with a sigh. "I wash my hands of the girl and her mad caprices, and advise you to do the same."

"You were kind to her once," said Duke. "I thank you for that. Don't be too hard on the poor child when I bring her back."

"A moment ago you were not going to bring her back! How you shift and change! Don't think to soften my heart by your devotion, young man. If you do bring her to Harlan as your wife you may have occasion for repentance."

"I am not going to bring her back to the envious circle of the thirty-nine articles," was the reply, "but I am going to bring her to preside over my home, if she will come."

"And do you think she will come?"

"That question," answered Duke, "troubles me more than all the rest. I hope she will come. I believe that she will."

"Well," said the old lady, "don't say that I did not warn you. That is why I sent for you, Duke. To warn you."

The young man left the house with a bitter feeling in his breast. He was disappointed in his old friend. He had depended upon her, and she had failed him. At the hotel he found Darling pacing up and down the lobby. They clasped hands as they met, but for an instant neither spoke. It seemed good to Duke to have the sympathy and support of this masterful man again—masterful in spite of his indolent ways.

"It knocks me all in a heap, don't you know," said Darling, presently. "I can't quite get my bearings. Perhaps you can suggest something?"

"The first thing is to find the girl," said Duke, with a catch in his voice.

"I don't know how to begin," said Darling.

"But you know her people," urged Duke, eagerly.

Darling shook his head.

"Sorry, old chap," said Darling, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, "but I can't communicate with her people."

"Don't you see," Duke hastened to reply, controlling himself by an effort, "that you are placing Louise in a bad light by your refusal to speak of her people, or your previous knowledge of her? You infer, always, that there is something in her past which ought not to be brought to light now. You have queer ideas of loyalty to friends!"

"I can't discuss the matter at this time," was Darling's cool reply.

Angrier than he had been during all the previous troubles with his open enemies, Duke walked about the lobby for a few moments and then turned back to Darling. After all, there was no need of antagonizing him. He might be acting for the best, but it was annoying to think that the man might easily place his mind at rest on several points if he would. However, it was only fair to let him continue in his own way.

"I can't leave for Philadelphia until nine," Duke said, presently, "so we may as well go over to the Herald office and see what they are doing with the extra."

"An extra?" Darling said, lifting his brows. "What is the occasion?"

"Oh, I imagine that you know all about it," replied Duke, with a smile. "I got my pointer from Representative Allen, of Darrow. He received his information from you. I should have talked with you concerning the matter on the train, only I feared you would find some way to check the publication of the matter now. My men are at work, and it is too late to stop it now. Come on over and read the lines. They may amuse you. In fact, I think they will!"

Darling, ignoring the whole matter of the railroad bill, even his own part in the expose so openly referred to, asked:

"You are going to the city to look for Miss Hilton?"

"Yes, and if I find her I shall bring her back to Harlan as my wife, if she will do me the honor to come as such."

"After all this—this bally gossip?" questioned Darling. "Well, you know your own business best, old chap. If you find her and she will come you are the luckiest man alive! Do you know you have a sort of a moral tonic effect on me, old fellow? You are the kind that keeps the world from going to the dogs, don't you know?"

CHAPTER XVI.

DAN MALONE'S PROPOSITION.

Reclining lazily in an easy chair, Darling watched the editor revising the proof-sheets of the Malone story as they came up the copy elevator to his desk. He now and then took one of the slips into his own hand and considered it gravely.

The story was fascinatingly bold and straight-from-the-shoulder. In writing it Duke had burned his bridges. If all he charged could be proven, there was an end of Dan Malone in Harlan. If it could not be proven, there was probably the finish of the Herald, for Malone would be likely to use the criminal law as well as civil law to crush it.

"You are taking big chances, old chap!" Darling warned, with an unusually bitter paragraph in his hand. "You need to be careful, you know."

"I can't fight Malone with blank cartridges," was the grave reply.

The Herald building was now the scene of the greatest activity. That one room where the two men sat, where all the momentous work was being directed, alone was quiet. Carrier boys had been routed out of bed to handle the extras, and they were swarming over the building noisily, sharing in the general excitement.

When a large number of the boys were assembled, the circulation manager read the head lines to them from proof sheets, giving them the main points of the story against Malone, and Duke and Darling, in the upper room, heard the shrill voices distinctly.

"Extra! Extra! All about Dan Malone. Forgery! Bribery. All about Malone!"

The boys chanted in chorus, somehow relishing the words, and now and then a clearer voice carried the sounds of ill omen to the dark street outside, causing the few passers to halt and linger in front of the newspaper building, which was seldom alight at that time of morning. Before very long a crowd of loungers was there, listening, for that chorus was a breaking of all established standards in Harlan: it was lese majeste in the city where Malone had ruled so long!

Some of the loungers appeared to be mill men, probably on their way to the works, for they whispered to each other in little groups as the cries of the boys reached their ears, and then one darted off on a run to inform the big boss of what was going on. In a surprisingly short time a carriage drew up before the office, and Malone and May alighted. Some of the boys inside skurried away as the two men entered and ascended the stairs hastily, while others, bolder, and more secure in the protection of doors held slightly ajar, shouted out derisive greetings. The average boy is rarely with the proverbial under dog in any fight. It is the winner who gets the applause of the young male of the race. Some of these boys had been ordered away from the iron mill when selling papers, and they were now exacting payment in full.

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Dan Malone! Forgery! Bribery! Dan Malone!"

The boys chanted the words until the two men stopped and sought to inflict physical punishment upon them. Then the tormentors hastened away and called back from distant passages. Duke and Darling heard the fracas, and heard, also, the heavy footsteps on the staircase.

"Some one has notified Malone and May," Duke said, "and we are in for a session with them."

Almost before the words were out of his mouth, the door was thrust open and Malone and May staggered into the room, their eyes still heavy from sleep, their clothing in a hasty disorder. Their bulky figures filled the space in front of Duke's desk, and Darling moved back. Malone glared at him for a moment and then turned to Duke.

"I am informed," he said, his breath coming in pants like the breath of a dog after a swift run, "that you are about to print an article reflecting on my integrity as an official of the Iron Company, and also questioning Senator May's honesty as a member of the State Senate."

"Something along the line you speak of," replied Duke.

"Then I am here to tell you," shouted Malone, "that you will be held to a strict accountability for every slurring remark you print concerning either of us."

Duke made no reply, and May stepped forward, pushing his master back almost rudely when he came in his way. May was much excited, and his face was purple.

"It seems to me," he said, trying to speak calmly, "that this misunderstanding has gone far enough. Mr. Malone is excited, and you may pass what he says. We did not come here to quarrel, but to restore peace. I hope that I shall be listened to in the spirit in which I speak."

"You waste your time and your breath," said Duke calmly. "The time for peace propositions is past."

In the silence which followed, while the two visitors stood glaring at each other, and at Duke and Darling, the voices of the newsboys came up from below.

"Extra! Extra! All about Dan Malone! Extra!"

Then one voice lifted above all the rest.

"Extra! Malone and May to be pinched! Extra!"

"Malone sank back into a chair and wiped his streaming face, streaming although the temperature of the room was not high. A ghastly smile came to May's lips as he faced Duke.

"You seem to have done your work well," he said. "It isn't every man who has such weapons at hand. Have you any idea what it will mean to Mr. Malone and to myself to have that cry turned loose on the streets? I am here to ask you to stop it. I don't pretend," he hastened on as Duke lifted a restraining hand, "that we can arrange all the details of a settlement at this hour. What we ask now is time in which to make a showing. Time in which to reply to your bill of particulars, as we say in court.

"We can convince you, Mr. Gaylord, that you are misinformed as to your alleged facts. Because of this you are doing us a deadly wrong, a wrong which it will be beyond your power to set right. Will you grant us time in which to make our showing?"

"Don't repeat the slanders you have heard without investigation," warned Malone.

"You must have been put to considerable expense," continued May, "in handling this matter, and it is a part of our proposition that we be permitted to share that expense, pending an inquiry into the rumors set afloat by sensation mongers and personal enemies. Mr. Malone has made a check for $10,000 which is here at your disposal, not as a bribe, not as an inducement to refrain from the publication you meditate, but as a guarantee that we are willing to bear the expenses of the investigation we propose."

"Once before, in this room," said Duke, "you attempted to bribe the Herald. You failed then, and will fail now. There is nothing more to be said."

"I tell you that something must be done!" cried Malone, arising to his feet and leaning over the desk with one shaking hand in the air. "I will never leave this room until the thing you are preparing is stopped!"

Duke could only shake his head and try to retain his temper.

"If you have no consideration for us," urged May, brushing Malone's hand [illegible] "you must have some for our f[illegible] We are not the only ones whos[illegible] be affected by the malice of our e[illegible]mies, by this tissue of lies you are fathering."

Duke made no reply. Malone had returned to his chair. May stood with his knuckles on the desk. It was a tense time. The voices of the newsboys had died away for a moment, but the gray winter morning was on, and the noises of the streets invaded the editorial rooms, harshly, with shrill, individual sounds.

Darling sat immovable in his chair, looking at the two bulky figures before him. He was thinking of the last time he had seen May in that room, when he, the attorney, had been the one to disregard the claims of the women in the case, and had been kicked into the street for the words he had used.

"The publication must not go on!" said Malone, over and over.

"Something must be done!" said Senator May.

Then May lifted an arm as if to emphasize words to be spoken, and Malone eyed him eagerly. This tool had done much for the iron master in the past, and it [illegible] be that the present difficulties could be set aside by the right words. Duke smiled and shifted in his chair. He knew how useless it all was.

A sharp call came from a speaking tube at the end of the desk where Duke sat. May fixed his eyes on the white mouthpiece of the coil and stood like one paralyzed. As Duke lifted the mouthpiece to his ear Darling leaned on the desk. He was not fearful that Duke would lose his nerve at the last moment, but it was just as well to have the thing over with. Darling knew that the speaking tube connected with the pressroom below.

In the stillness they all heard the hearty voice which came up from the basement, from the man in charge of the big printing presses, waiting there to blazon Dan Malone's crimes abroad to the world.

"We are ready, sir," came the voice.

Duke's face was deadly pale.

"All right! Let it go! And run the press as long as there are orders. Ten thousand go to Manton!"

"What does it mean?" demanded May, turning to Darling. "Can't you stop him?"

Darling did not answer, for from below came a long, slow rumble which quickened with every second and advanced into a stead whir and hum. The big press was at work, and the floor vibrated a trifle under the feet of the four men. The voices of the newsboys came up to the room again.

"All about Dan Malone! Extra! Extra!"

Doors below opened and closed with a bang. There was tramping of swift feet on the stairs, and a boy with ink on his clothes and his grinning face dashed into the room and laid a damp sheet before the editor. Malone and May bent forward to look at it. It steamed printer's ink into their faces, and was blurred where May put a shaking finger on it. The great key-line stared them in the face:

"Dan Malone a Forger and a Traitor!"

"All about Dan Malone! Extra!"

Duke marked an "O. K." on the sheet and the boy with the inky face went bounding down the stairs with it. May covered his face with his hands, and Duke arose and went to the window facing the street. The morning was dull and cheerless, with patches of snow and mud alternating on the pavements. Below the crowd was cheering the boys as they took the extra from their hands and paid in dimes and quarters.

At last Malone arose from his chair and moved toward the door. May followed him, walking like one in a daze. At the threshold Malone turned back.

"You appear to hold the winning hand just now," he said, with a calmness which the editor did not give him credit for at that time, "but I warn you that you are facing ruin! You can't prove half you are printing, and you'll get a striped suit from the State before you are done with me. Come, May."

The Senator looked out of the window to the crowd below.

"Is there no other way?" he asked, turning to Duke. "Can we gain the street by a rear exit?"

"No," replied Duke. "Your way lies there, through the crowd on the street."

"It is needless for me to say that I echo the idea just expressed by Mr. Malone," said May savagely. "The time will come when you will be sorry for what you are doing now."

And the two men passed down the s[illegible] case, and through the jeering crowd, [illegible] in arm, and so gained the side street [illegible] their carriage, and were driven a[illegible] amidst the jeers of the newsboys.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRIVATE DINING ROOM.

Duke and Darling stood by the window a moment after Malone and May passed out. They saw them shoulder their way through the crowd, insulted by those who would have cringed before them only yesterday, and pass from view.

"It is unfortunate that they came here as they did," said Duke. "It was a trying time. Only for the fact that I am fighting for Louise as well as myself, against her [illegible] vicious enemies, I might have listened to them, and awaited further developments."

"No you wouldn't," said Darling, hastily. "You know you wouldn't. If you had changed your policy a particle in answer to their demands, they would have gone out and proclaimed that they had bluffed you, don't you know. They're a pair of bounders, you see, old chap, and you've got to bruise their heads if you get a chance."

"You may be right, but it is an unpleasant thing I'm doing," replied Duke.

When they left the office they found it difficult to make their way through the streets. Everywhere were friendly faces and words. Everywhere additional information was eagerly sought. Extras were selling by the thousands, and out-going trains were carrying them away in all directions. Some there were who were extremely guarded in what they said, and others tried to leave a threat of future consequences in what they whispered cautiously to the young editor.

"I've just left Malone and May," said one business man. "They are closeted with Tom Greenway, the great criminal lawyer, and seem to be full of fight. Greenway laughs at the idea of charging them with forgery and bribery. I'm afraid you've got a big fight on your hands, Duke," he added as he passed along.

"That man," laughed Duke, "has paper in Hill's bank with Malone's name on the back [illegible] He will busy himself with that tale [illegible]"

"Well," was the not very encouraging response from Darling, "you haven't won the battle yet, you know, old chap. Malone [illegible] loaded with money and saturated with venom. You keep an eye on him, and on his [illegible] mill hands!"

At the hotel they secured a private table, but were constantly annoyed by being [illegible] People [illegible] who had heard of their presence [illegible] invaded the dining room to stare at them and they were both glad when the meal was over. When they left the hotel Darling walked toward Hill's bank and Duke took a cab for the railroad station. In two hours the latter walked into the great department store and met Lawrence at the door.

"Well, young man," said the merc[illegible] looking over Duke smilingly, "you have [illegible] last succeeded in stirring up a State-wide sensation. You evidently haven't forgotten the night May, doubtless acting for Malo[illegible] got us ejected from the restaurant!"

Duke gritted his teeth at the thought of the incident.

"The crop May sowed that night is bearing seed," he said.

"Glad to see you anyway," said Lawrence. "Come up to the house for luncheon. Annie will be pleased to hear from Harlan and Mrs. Hill."

"Pleased, I'm sure," replied Duke, "but the fact is I'm in the city on a hunt for Miss Hilton, and may have more of a job on my hands than I anticipate. Do you think Mrs. Lawrence could give me any information? You knew, of course, that Miss Hilton had lost herself again?"

"Yes," replied Lawrence, "I knew, but let me give you a pointer, young man. Don't you go to asking Annie to help you find Louise! If you do, she'll bite your head off! I don't dare mention her name in the house since this last escapade of hers!"

Duke stood amazed. Mrs. Lawrence had cast the girl out! Just what Duke was thinking at that time concerning the loyalty of womankind need not be set down here!

"So that is the way of it?" he said, in a moment.

"That is just the way of it," replied Lawrence. "Now, if you'll come back to the private office, I'll talk with you."

"[illegible] have news of the girl?" asked Duke eagerly.

"Yes; I have news. Wait until we are seated."

"I never knew you to be quite so delibe[illegible] before!" snarled Duke, as Lawrence seated himself [illegible] his desk and handed out a box of cigars. "[illegible]ell me this: Have you seen Miss Hilton?"

"First," said Lawrence, provokingly, "what interest have you in Miss Hilton?"

"I am going to ask Miss Hilton to become my wife!" was the quick reply. "I believe the time has come when she should be protected from her friends!"

"I see," said the merchant. "Has she ever intimated that she would become your wife, in order to secure protection from her friends, or for any other reason?"

"Cut it!" cried Duke. "If you know [illegible] th[illegible]

"[illegible] wrence. "I know where sh[illegible] [illegible] and in good spirits, and an[illegible] she stood there by the corner of [illegible] asking to be excused for the re[illegible]

"[illegible] your employ again?" demanded Duke, springing to his feet. "Where did she go? Why should she ask for leave of [illegible]s of all d[illegible]

"[illegible]e question at a time, man! She came back to me, looking—looking—well, to be frank about it, rather peaked, and I gave her the old job. I haven't told Mrs. Lawrence about it yet! I'm almost afraid to go hom[illegible] for fear she has found me out."

"When I meet Mrs. Lawrence," said D[illegible] stubbornly, "I'm going to ask her to permit Louise to be married from her hous[illegible]"

"If you do," said Lawrence, "she'll ha[illegible] you arrested!"

"Well!" said Duke. "There are other places! You'll come, won't you?"

"If I did," laughed Lawrence, "Annie would go home to mama!"

Duke turned away with a frown on his face.

"You know how it is with the ladie[illegible]" Lawrence called after him. "Come [illegible] here when you find her, and I'll [illegible] know whether I care to [illegible]" And, by the way, he added, wit[illegible] grin, "Louise is to be here at fiv[illegible]"

"To-night! At five o'clock to-[illegible]"

Duke thought he was quite calm, but Lawrence sat and laughed at his voice and manner. He threw himself into a [illegible]

"Tell me about her!" he said.

"[illegible] d Lawrence. "You be here at five o'clock. And don't you dare ask her to marry [illegible] ing by. Annie would insist that I was an accessory before the fact in that case!"

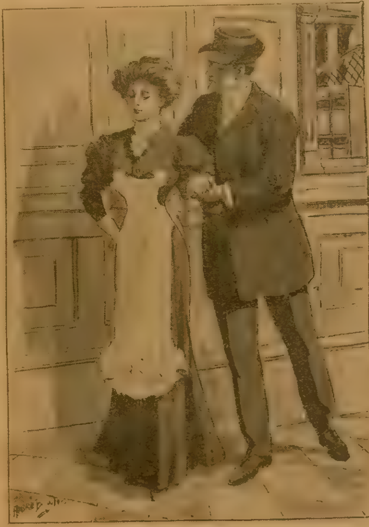
"[illegible] hang!" roared Duke, and dashed out of the door.

"Wait!" [illegible] out. "Have you see[illegible] fight at Manton? [illegible] there, and Malone is [illegible]g for gore. He [illegible]s you are to be [illegible]ted on charge of [illegible]al slander a[illegible] be careful that [illegible] catch you away from home, where you can't get bail. Dan would like to get you behind bars, you doubtless know. I should think he would pay out quite a lot of money to see you doing the lock-step in a striped suit!"

"Yes, I know," replied Duke, with a grin at the picture drawn, verbally, by his friend. "He promised me just such a suit, this morning, but I haven't yet accepted of his offer. Dan is a cheerful sort of an enemy. There's quite a lot of humor in the old fellow, after all."

"Well," added L[illegible]rence, "there is mighty little humor in this. It is a serious proposition, for Malone has the ear of the officers up there. I reckon he made most of them, didn't he?"

"Oh, they are all his creatures," replied Duke, "but I don't think they will all stand by him under the circumstances. Such [illegible]ures usually run at the first shot, and



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ECZEMA CAN BE CURED TO STAY, and when I say cured, I mean just what I say—C-U-R-E-D, and not merely patched up for awhile, to return worse than before. Now, I do not care what all you have used, nor how many doctors have told you that you could not be cured—all I ask is just a [illegible] TODAY, I will send [illegible] FREE TRIAL of my mild, soothing, guaranteed cure that will convince you more in a day than I or [illegible] in a month's time. If you are disgusted and discouraged, I dare you to give me a [illegible] my claims. By writing me to-day you will enjoy more real comfort than you had ever [illegible] world holds for you. Just try it and you will [illegible] I am telling you the truth.
Dr. J. E. Cannaday, 64 Park Square, Sedalia, Mo.
Reference: Third National Bank. Could you do a better act than to send this notice to some

they all know what Malone is all right."

Indeed it was a serious proposition, and [illegible] had said, had the ear of the public officers at Harlin, and it was more than likely that a warrant for his arrest on charge of criminal slander was already out. And his leaving the city so soon after the appearance of the extra would look like flight to those who did not know him!

Duke considered the matter gravely as he walked about the streets, waiting for five o'clock to come. Ordinarily he would have spent the intervening time at the home of the Lawrences, but now his heart was bitter against Mrs. Lawrence because of her defection from Louise, so he remained away.

One thing that troubled him was this: Ought he to confide in Louise, and, under the circumstances, ask her to marry him at once, before the charges which were sure to be made had been tried out in court and settled one way or the other? He could not make up his mind, and resolved to be guided by circumstances.

It was not a long time from eleven in the forenoon to five in the afternoon, but to the waiting and anxious young man it seemed an eternity. He had many serious propositions to consider, too, but always the joy of the coming meeting was first in his mind. At exactly five minutes to five he was back at the department store, and Lawrence was out in front to meet him.

"There is some one waiting for you back there," he said, smiling, and turned away.

In nearly all department stores of large cities girl clerks are required to wear what is called a "uniform," though what they wear does not at all come up to what the word conveys to the public mind. It is not at all like the red and brass uniform of the strutting soldier who has just come to love his country to the extent of drawing a monthly stipend from it, being only a neat black gown, trim about the waist, and a neat white apron with narrow arms running up over the shoulders. This, at least, was the regulation dress at Lawrence's. When Duke reached the cashier's cage he found Louise standing just outside the wire wall clad in such a rig.

He looked at her for a moment, without speaking a word, as she stood blushing before him. It was quite unusual, at that time of day, that there should be no one in their immediate vicinity. After satisfying himself of this fact, the young man promptly took the girl into his arms and kissed her. I don't attempt to defend the action. It was highly improper, and Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Lawrence would have been justified in holding up their hands in dismay at the incident, up their hands in dismay at the incident, but he had long hungered for this moment, and, then, Louise did not show much resistance! She afterwards declared that she was so overcome by surprise that she entirely lost sight of what the proprieties demanded.

"I am glad that I found you here, away from the others, and in the dress of a working girl!" Duke said, then, holding Louise at arm's length and looking into her eyes: "I hoped to find you like this."

"You are a sentimental boy!" was all Louise could say.

"Why," replied Duke, "don't you know that I first saw you right about where we are now standing? That is, dear, I first saw you here in this present incarnation! I have given up trying to place you in this life before that time, and so have come to the conclusion that we know each other in another existence! Anyway, I have known you always! Now, I'm not going to lose you again! Get on your wraps, dear, and we'll go right out somewhere and get married!"

Louise drew back and laughed, while Duke stood looking on, not seeing anything in the situation that called for mirth. Then Louise looked into his face.

"You are a rude wooer, young man!" she said. "I haven't even promised to marry you! I don't think, indeed, that you ever asked me—before!"

Louise tried to look dignified and stern, but there was a look in her face that appeared to satisfy Duke, who went off to find Lawrence, in order to get Louise "properly discharged," he said. Lawrence came back with him, and the three stood talking together for a moment. The merchant's eyes were brimming with mischief. More than once Duke regarded him with suspicion.

"There's something on!" the young man insisted. "You're looking too jolly over the loss of a pretty cashier, old man."

Lawrence protested that he was only happy because of the happiness of his friends, "a sort of reflected happiness, you know," he said, and they moved toward the [illegible]

"It is a dear old place," said Louise, turning back. "I have found good friends here. I have been happy here!"

Directly they were in a closed c[illegible] driving away through the brilliantly [illegible] streets. Yes, a carriage with [illegible] drawn, for what other kind wou[illegible] in his right mind choose?

"Where are you taking me?" asked the girl, presently, after Duke had told her about the message from Mrs. Hill and t[illegible] haste he had made in getting to the store.

"Why," replied Duk[illegible] ride around a bit [illegible] minds what is best to do. We ought to be married in a very quiet place, you know, for there is Malone to reckon with, and I think—that is, I imagine there—there is a—or that there may be, a warrant for me. We don't want to have an officer come and take me away from the altar, do we?"

"Are they going to arrest you?" asked the girl, holding closer to his arm.

"Oh, I presume so," was the brazen reply. "You see, this is the usual thing when editors attack prominent men! Quite the usual thing! The warrant is served, and then the thing is fought out in the courts. Nothing unusual in this case!"

"I thought they locked people up after they got them arrested," said Louise.

"Not editors!" laughed Duke. "The jailors are afraid of editors! And now, where?"

"Do you remember," said the girl, "a little private dining room at the big hotel, where we set out, once, to dine with the Lawrences, and from which they were called away, leaving us alone together there? It was there that I first saw what was in your heart, where I decided what I should do under certain contingencies. If you don't mind, then, Duke, we'll go to the little private dining room. The police won't find you there!"

The continuation of this splendid story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscriptions, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

THE TWO GLASSES.

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

There sat two glasses filled to the brim,
On a rich man's table, rim to rim.
One was ruddy and red as blood,
And one was clear as the crystal flood.

Said the glass of wine to his paler brother
"Let us tell tales of the past to each other,
I can tell of banquet and revel and mirth,
When I was king, for I ruled in might
For the proudest and grandest souls on earth
Fell under my touch as though struck with blight.

"From the heads of kings I have torn the crown;
From the heights of fame I have hurled men down;
I have blasted many an honored name
I have taken virtue and given shame
I have tempted the youth with a s[illegible] taste,
That has made his future a barren waste.
Far greater than any king am I,
Or than any army beneath the sky.

"I have made the arm of the driver fail,
And sent the train from the iron rail,
I have made good ships go down at sea,
And the shrieks of the lost were sweet to me.
Fame, strength, wealth, genius before me fall;
And my might and power are over a[illegible]
Ho, ho' pale brother," said the wine,
"Can you boast of deeds as great as mine?"

Said the water glass: "I cannot boast
Of a king dethroned, or a murdered host,
But I can tell of hearts that were sad
By my crystal drops made bright and glad,
Of thirsts I have quenched, and brows I have laved,
Of hands I have cooled and lives I have saved
I have leaped thro' the valley, dashed down the mountain,
Slept in the sunshine, and dripped from the fountain.

"I have burst my cloud-fetters and dropped from the sky,
And everywhere gladdened the prospect and eye;
I have eased the hot forehead of fever and pain;
I have made the parched meadows grow fertile with grain
I can tell of the powerful wheel of the mill,
That ground out the flour, and turned, by my will,
I can tell of manhood debased by you,
That I have uplifted and crowned anew,
I cheer, I help, I strengthen, and aid,
I gladden the heart of man and maid,
I set the wine-chained captive free,
And all are better for knowing me."

These are the tales they told each other,
The glass of wine and his paler brother,
As they sat together, filled to the brim,
At the rich man's table, rim to rim.

ROSE'S LOVER.

All Rose's girl friends told her that she would have trouble when she became engaged to Rex Henrik.

"Before you came back from your visit said one girl, he flirted outrageously with every girl in the neighborhood.

But Rose only smiled and said: "That is all right. I was not engaged to him then, you know."

At the death of his uncle Rex Henrik had become heir to a large farm in Mun-[illegible] He had settled down and astonished [illegible] friends of his youth by his skill in [illegible] and his engagement to pretty Rose Brown.

Rose had one acquaintance who was far from friendly toward her. Helen Bray had always been jealous of her and did not try to cover or conceal her feelings.

"I have a plan," she said suddenly one day to several girls friends, as they stood at her gate chatting. "I have a cousin who is three years older than I. She is a handsome brunette, and I guess, with a good deal of coaxing, I can induce her to come and make me a visit. If I can," she said determinedly, "Rose Brown wants to watch her beau. Iola Davenport will flirt with him in s[illegible]."

The girls watched and waited for the coming of Helen's cousin. She was very pretty in her w[illegible] gown with a bunch of big red roses upon her bosom, but no one there made her m[illegible] her beauty more [illegible]n Rose Brown.

"You will spend the summer with us, of course?" asked Rose almost immediately after her introduction.

"That depends," laughed Iola Dav[illegible] lightly, "on how well I enjoy myself."

"I am sure we will all try to make your visit pleasant," returned Rose, readily. "We want to make you feel that you would like always to stay with us here." She smiled sweetly as she spoke, while some of the others knowing what they did, wondered at the way in which Rose received her rival.

Always Rose planned every pleasure for her friend, Miss Davenport, who received them with her usual graciousness. Never before were there so many picnics and dances as were planned during that s[illegible] summer, and Rose was as gay as her rival was gracious, and carelessly left Rex in the company of the charming Iola.

"It seems strange that Rose cannot see that Rex is actually becoming quite attentive to Iola Davenport," more than one of Rose's friends was heard to remark.

Iola Davenport soon saw the situation herself. "She either does not care or she feels sure of him," she thought, and as the short summer days fled swiftly, she still lingered among them.

"I might do worse than marry Rex!" she said, musingly, as she stood before her mirror admiring her own dark beauty in the reflection. "He has money enough, so they all say, but I could not and would not mope my life out in misery here in this town. We will go to the city to live. I never was intended for a farmer's wife, anyway, and I don't intend to be long!" she added decidedly, as she began to arrange her hair.

At home in her room, poor little Rose Brown sat gazing out of the window with tearful eyes and heavy heart.

"I hope that I have not done wrong in placing them together so much," she said softly to herself. "I merely wanted to test Rex. I am afraid that I have lost him now, forever, and it seems as if my heart would break. I love him so, but I want all his love, or none of it, and that is why I did it."

Rex Henrik stood in the open door of his big farmhouse and looked away over the wide spreading fields, ripe with ready harvest; but his thoughts were not there.

"Confound it!" he muttered meaningly to himself. "I don't see what makes Rose avoid me so much and leave me to that Iola Davenport! I cannot stand it any longer and I shall speak to her about it if she goes with us on the ride tomorrow. I like Iola well enough, but Rose is the only woman I want for a wife and she ought to know that I would like a little of her company occasionally." As he spoke, he sighed and went off to his work with heavy heart.

This ride was a regular event with the young folks every summer when the first touches of autumn were in the air. The following day was favorably fair and they started off in great spirits with Rex Henrik driving his pair of big bay horses hitched to his buckboard and with Iola Davenport sitting chatting beside him. Rose Brown contented herself with a seat behind.

Rose kept the tears from showing in her eyes, but it was with an effort that she carried on an indifferent conversation and laughed as lightly as any one about her, while Rex, unknown to her, was mildly cross with the brunette beauty beside him for having usurped the place he intended for Rose. He hardly heard her constant chatter nor saw her gracious glances meant only for him.

At last they reached the end of their ride and were soon busy spreading out their lunch on the grass. After they had eaten all that lay before them they scattered and strolled about the woods and fields for an hour or so before the return homeward.

With heavy, aching and anxious heart Rose managed to slip silently away by herself and, beside the brook, she covered her face with her hands and cried softly to herself. She was startled suddenly by a step beside her and glancing up quickly she saw Rex standing before her, looking at her with the love light showing stronger than she had ever seen it before in his eyes.

She blushed confusedly as she rose to her feet and began to walk away. He stepped quickly forward and seized her almost rudely in his arms and drew her to him.

"Why have you wandered off here all alone?" he asked anxiously, as he looked down into her tearful eyes.

"Because——" she stammered slowly, "I thought you wanted to have her all to yourself," she replied readily.

"Who?" he demanded decidedly.

"Iola Davenport," returned Ro[illegible] "I thought that you were tired of [illegible] wanted only her," she said, sobbingly.

"Do you think that I care for her [illegible] Davenport?" demanded Rex almost desperately, and then, as she simply replied by bowing her head, he went on: "I do not. You should be the first to know that, Rose," he said, seriously. "She has fairly forced her company upon me and I was wanting only—you—all the time, sweetheart."

"Oh, Rex!" murmured Rose, happily. "I was the one to blame all the time. I put her before me simply to try to test you, and I thought I had broken my own heart. But I love you now more than ever, for I know now that you are—all mine!" she said seriously.

A Beautiful Woman's Fate.

In real life there are many strange things that, if introduced in a story would be ridiculed as extremely improbable. What would be thought, for instance, of a novelist who would confine his heroine in an insane asylum for twenty-seven years, and she perfectly sane all that time? Yet this was the deplorable fate of Miss Adrianna Brinckle, who, several years ago, was one of the most attractive belles of Philadelphia.

Accustomed to the luxuries suppl[illegible] by a wealthy and indulgent father, Doctor William Draper Brinckle, she could not endure the economy enforced by misfortune, when her father had lost most of his property. So long as merchants gave credit, she continued the extravagant habits begun in prosperous days.

Expostulation proving useless, her father had her committed temporarily, [illegible] thought—to the State Lunatic Asyl[illegible] Harrisburg, on the charge of "extravagance [illegible] eccentricity," intending to remove her after a brief period of confinement had taught her a wholesome lesson.

A short time after her incarceration, the father died; therefore, his intention to remove his daughter from the asylum was strangely frustrated by fate. Since that time, for over twenty-seven years, the unfortunate woman remained the companion of lunatics until an investigation by the authorities disclosed the facts [illegible] and the poor v[illegible] She [illegible]tered the [illegible] and attractive belle [illegible] left it a melancholy, gray-haired woman of fifty. It is wonderful that, d[illegible] her sad fate, she did not really lose her [illegible]

Heredity.

The Doctor (after examination)—You have an exceedingly bad case of tobacco heart.

The Patient—But I never use tobacco!

The Doctor—But your father did. I knew

Boys and Girls Corner

The Boy With Muscle;

Or, A 3,000-Mile Motor-Car Race

By Stephen Angus Cox

[Copyright 1910 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER XIII.

BIG RACE ARRANGED.

GERALD was temporarily paralyzed with horror.

He supposed that Sandy was dead, and the thought was so terrible that for a few moments he simply sat there, gazing vacantly down at the body lying huddled in the bottom of the automobile.

Then suddenly he aroused himself and grasped Sandy by the shoulder and shook him.

"Sandy! Sandy!" he cried. "Are you alive? Speak, Sandy!"

An excited crowd was gathered around the motor car in an instant, and strong hands lifted Sandy's body.

As this was done, the youth gave a gasp, opened his eyes and said, in a weak, tremulous voice:

"What is it? What has happened?"

"Thank goodness! he isn't dead!" cried Gerald.

"You were shot!" said one of the spectators. "Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes, I remember, now," said Sandy.

"Where did the bullet hit you?" asked another.

Sandy was breathing regularly, now, and was able to sit up in the seat.

"The pain was here," he said, placing his hand over his heart.

"Yes, there's the hole in your coat!" said Gerald.

Sure enough, right over Sandy's heart there was a hole in the coat, and unbuttoning it, and then the waistcoat, it was seen what had saved Sandy's life: He was wearing a pair of suspenders that had large, heavy steel buckles, and the bullet had hit one of these buckles, driving it against Sandy's body, right over the heart, with sufficient force to stop the organ from beating and render him temporarily unconscious. Aside from a good-sized bruised place, however, Sandy was not damaged.

"Well, say, what luck!" exclaimed Gerald. "That buckle certainly saved your life, old fellow! You ought to keep that always as a souvenir."

"No, I think I had better keep on wearing it, Gerald," with a smile. "I might run up against Zack Bagley, and he might try to shoot me down again."

A policeman had come up, and also a reporter, and the former said, eagerly:

"Do you mean to say that you were shot by Zack Bagley?"

"Yes, sir," replied Sandy.

The reporter had his notebook out and was taking notes.

"You know Bagley?" the officer asked.

"He ought to," said Gerald; "he is the boy who captured that burglar, out at Milburn, a few days ago."

"You don't say so!" with interest.

"Yes."

The reporter was all interest, too, and he said to Sandy, eagerly:

"Is your name Sandy Hardin?"

"Yes," was the reply.

The reporter scribbled industriously, and the policeman asked:

"Did you see which way the fellow went after he fired the shot?"

Gerald pointed to the big building nearby.

"He went into that lobby," he said. "Doubtless he went up two or three floors, and then made his way back to rear and down another elevator, and is far away from here by this time."

"Probably you are right; but I'll have a look in there for him, anyway."

He hastily entered the building, and the reporter began asking questions. Sandy was modest, and wanted to cut the reporter off without much information, but Gerald wanted his friend to have all the praise that was his due, and so answered the reporter's questions himself.

In the end, the reporter vouchsafed the information that Zack Bagley had escaped from Sheriff Holt while en route from Kingston to Sing Sing.

"We hadn't heard of it," said Sandy.

"It was in the papers," said the reporter; "but you didn't happen to notice it."

Then he thanked Gerald and Sandy, congratulated the latter on his lucky escape, and hastened away toward the newspaper office where he was employed.

"Now we'll be off," said Gerald, and he started the machine and it moved slowly away, the crowd dispersing quickly, now that the excitement was over.

"How does your heart feel, Sandy?" asked Gerald. "It is working along all right."

"Yes, Gerald. The flesh feels somewhat sore, but the heart is all right, I am sure."

"That is good. I am glad of it."

Presently they reached the Wellwood Athletic Club building, and Gerald brought the machine to a stop.

"Let's go in," he said.

"Just as you say," said Sandy.

Just as they were getting out, another motor car drew up to the curb, just behind Gerald's car. In it were Mark Tully and Fred Seldon, a chum.

Tully nodded coldly to Gerald and glared at Sandy, who returned the look calmly.

"Hello, is that your new car?" asked Gerald, with interest.

"Yes; got it this morning," was the reply.

"It looks like a good one."

"You're right, and it is a good one, too. It can show its heels to that one of yours that you have bragged about, so much, all right."

"Don't you believe it!" denied Gerald.

"I don't believe it, I know it."

"Bosh! You just think you know it. In an actual test, you would find that you didn't know as much as you thought you did."

"Oh, go on, Hotchkiss! You would be left behind from the start, and would never get in sight again."

Gerald was up in arms at once.

"Say, what's the matter with you, Tully?" he cried. "If you want to race me, say so. I'll go you, for anything from a pin's fee to ten thousand dollars; and any distance, from a mile to a thousand or more."

"I'll give you a race," said Tully. "And I'll beat you to a whisper, too!"

"What shall the stake be?"

"I don't care what. I don't need money, but we will say one thousand dollars, and and that will pay the expenses of the race."

"Done! How far shall we race?"

"I don't care. I'll leave that——"

"Just at this moment a newsboy came running along, calling out lustily:

"Uxtry! Uxtry! All erbout ther great earthquake at San Francisco! Uxtry!"

"Give us a paper, sonny!" cried Gerald.

"Here! I want one, too!" from Tully.

Seldon and Sandy took papers, also, and the four stood there, reading about the terrible earthquake out at San Francisco.

"Say!" exclaimed Gerald, suddenly looking up from the perusal of the startling news.

"Well?" from Tully.

"I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll race you from here to San Francisco, for one thousand dollars, the winner to donate the whole to the earthquake sufferers. What do you say?"

"Done!" cried Tully. "When shall we start?"

"The sooner, the better. We want to get there as quickly as possible, you know."

"So we do. Jove, I'm eager to see the place!"

"You'll go with me, of course, Sandy," said Gerald.

"Yes, of course," was the reply.

"And how about you Fred?" queried Tully. "Will you go with me?"

"Sure! Say, I think it will be great sport!"

"I guess it will be lively work, too!" smiled Gerald.

"No doubt about that," coincided Tully. "And I'm going to be in San Francisco, waiting for you, Hotchkiss."

"Don't you believe it, my boy. I'll be telegraphing back to Salt Lake City or Carson City, asking if they have seen anything of you."

"Go on! You won't expend any money in telegraph tolls, I can tell you—not on that score, at least."

Gerald laughed.

"Let's come to a decision as to when we shall start," he said.

"Let's make it eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Very well; that suits me."

"And me."

"It's settled, then?"

"Yes."

"Where shall we make the start from?"

"Right here."

"In front of the Club, eh?"

"Yes."

"All right: we'll be here by seven o'clock, ready for the start."

"And so will we be here."

"Good enough!"

They entered the Club, told their friends and fellow members about the race, and placed checks for one thousand dollars in the hands of the treasurer of the Club, with instructions that it was to be forwarded to the chairman of the Relief Committee at San Francisco as soon as the race was ended, and to be considered as the donation of the winner of the race.

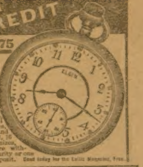
A little later Gerald and Sandy went out, got in their automobile and rode swiftly in the direction of Gerald's home.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE START.

"You are going to start for San Francisco in the morning!"

The exclamation was from the lips of Grace Hotchkiss, when Gerald and Sandy had entered and the former had explained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Soporific.

"I heard one man," said the playwright, "who attended the premiere of my new play last night complain that it was so late when he got out."

"Yes?" queried the critics.

"Yes, and yet the final curtain fell before 10:45."

"Ah! perhaps he overslept himself."

A Legal Doctor.

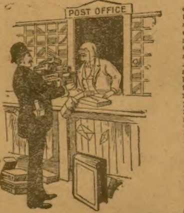
"When Justice Brewer," said a Kansas lawyer, "was on the Leavenworth circuit as a criminal judge he had no patience with the pleas of hypnotism and such newfangled notions that then were coming to the fore. Once, I remember, a man was being tried before him for shoplifting. A witness said he thought the prisoner had kleptomania.

"'I presume, judge,' he added, 'you know what kleptomania is, eh?'

"'Yes,' said the judge, 'I do. It is a disease that I am sent here to cure.'"

A Member of the Down-and-Outs.

"Many a man," said Uncle Eben, "thinks he's havin' a tremenjous big time as a sport when he is merely goin' through de initiation of de Down-and-out Club."



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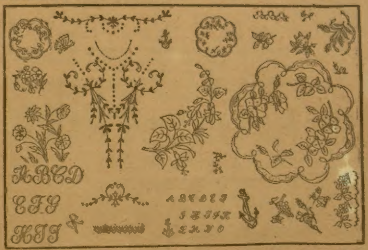

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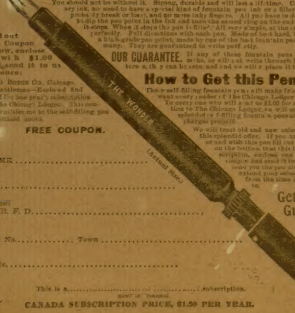

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that he was going to start for the Pacific Coast next morning.

"That is just what we are going to do, Sis," nodded Gerald.

"And you are going to race with Mark Tully?"

"Yes."

The girl's face took on a sober expression.

"I am afraid that you will never reach there alive!" she said.

"What makes you feel that way about it, Sis?"

"Oh, you are so reckless, Gerald! And in a race, you will be inclined to take desperate chances, I fear; and just think of the awful precipices in the mountains! What if you should go over one of them!" and she shuddered.

"Oh, we'll look out for ourselves, Sis. We are not going to go over a precipice if we can help it, you may be sure."

Then they fell to discussing the earthquake. Grace had read the paper, and they talked perhaps half an hour on this subject. Then Gerald said that he must see to getting the car ready for the race across the continent

"I'll help you," said Sandy.

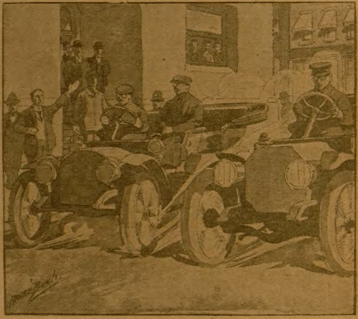
Grace gave her brother an appealing, significant look, and he understood and said:

"There is nothing that you can do, Sandy. I'll attend to everything. You stay here and talk to Sis."

"All right; that will suit me, first rate," with an earnestness and a look into the girl's eyes that brought a rush of color to her face.

Gerald went bustling out, and left the two together.

"I wanted to talk to you, Sandy," said Grace. "You know, brother is reckless and harum-scarum, and I want that you shall watch him closely, and not let him take any more chances than you can possibly help. You will do it?"



"Go!"

"Certainly, Grace!"

"I am so glad! And I am glad that you are to accompany him, Sandy. If he were to go alone, I should expect never to see him again."

"I will do my best to keep him from being foolishly reckless, Grace."

"Do! And, Sandy, I wish you would do the driving, when you are in the mountains. Can you manage it, do you think?"

"I'll try.

"Whenever you are in a dangerous place, or brother gets reckless, think of me, Sandy, and use your best efforts to keep him within bounds."

"I will!"

Gerald came back in about an hour, and said that he had ordered the house chauffeur to clean and oil the motor car, and to provision it for a long trip.

"I told him to put in all the tools necessary in repair work," went on Gerald. "You see, I will have the advantage of Tully, in that I shall have some one along who understands repairing automobiles, while he will not. Fred Seldon doesn't know anything at all about motor cars, save to drive them, after a fashion."

"I can repair any ordinary trouble," said Sandy; "and if I had a small gasoline hand-forge, I could even repair more or less serious breaks on the road."

"That's a good idea!" said Gerald. "I'll tell Wilson to get a hand-forge."

He hastened out again, delighted to think that this would give him a big advantage over his competitor in the race across the continent.

When Mr. Hotchkiss and his wife came in, later on, and were told about the race that was to take place, they did not seem to be greatly surprised.

"It is just about what might be expected of Gerald," sighed Mrs. Hotchkiss.

"You are going to go along, of course, Sandy?" remarked Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Oh, I couldn't get along without Sandy!" grinned Gerald.

They talked of the race a while, and then discussed the earthquake horror.

They were still thus engaged when dinner was announced.

They made their way to the dining-room and ate dinner, talking the while, and afterward all repaired to the drawing-room, and the three young folks sang a number of songs, Grace playing the accompaniments.

"You are not going out to-night, are you, brother?" asked Grace.

"No," replied Gerald. "For once in my life, I am going to stay at home and go to bed when the curfew rings."

"Oh, I am so glad!"

"You see, we are going to have a hard trip ahead of us, and I want to start out as fresh and bright as possible," went on Gerald.

"That's a good idea," nodded his father.

"It would be a good plan for him to make a practice of it," said Mrs. Hotchkiss.

"What! Make a practice of going to bed at nine o'clock?" cried Gerald, throwing up his hands and looking tragic. "Oh, never!"

It was nearly ten o'clock when they went to bed, however, but this was exceedingly early for them.

They were up early, next morning, and ate breakfast before daylight—something unprecedented in their experience, that is, of all save Sandy.

The youths began getting ready for the start immediately after breakfast, and at half-past six o'clock, they bade Mr. and Mrs. Hotchkiss and Grace good-by, climbed into the automobile and moved away down Fifth Avenue.

They were at the Club shortly after seven, and a few moments later Tully and Seldon came up in the former's new motor car.

"We beat you here," smiled Gerald.

"That's all right," said Tully; "but we'll beat you to San Francisco."

"That remains to be seen," retorted Gerald.

They entered the Club and registered, and soon some more of the members put in an appearance. They were curious to see the start of the great race.

A number laid wagers, some favoring Gerald and some Tully. These young fellows were glad to have something to excite their interest, and on which to lay wagers.

The secretary of the Club was to be starter, and when it was a quarter to eight, all went out on the sidewalk. Gerald and Sandy got in their car, and Tully and Seldon took their places in theirs, and the two machines were lined up, exactly even.

The secretary stood there, watch in hand, and the members conversed with the four in the motor cars.

A few remarked that they wished they were going along, but the majority said they preferred to stay in "Little Old New York."

Presently the secretary said:

"Ten minutes to go!"

The talk was more rapid, now, and the club members wished the racers all kinds of luck.

"Good luck to you, and may the best man win," said one.

"Yes, the best man and the best car," said Tully.

"Five minutes!" said the secretary, in a sober voice.

Gerald and Tully began to finger the levers and wheel.

"Four!" said the secretary.

Talking ceased. There was too much excitement and eagerness to see the start, for conversation to continue.

"Four——three—two——one," said the secretary.

All waited breathlessly, and then suddenly the secretary cried sharply:

"Go!"

Instantly the two magnificent cars leaped forward, almost as if alive, and up Fifth avenue they flew, side by side.

CHAPTER XV.

IN CHICAGO.

The great race was on!

The automobiles remained side by side till they came to 23d street, and then Gerald turned to the left and headed toward the North River.

Tully continued onward, flinging back over his shoulder the words:

"I'll be in San Francisco to greet you when you get there!"

"Yes, you will—not!" retorted Gerald, and then the street cars shut out their view of each other, and Gerald turned his attention to guiding his machine.

Twenty-third street is a busy one, and Gerald had to go slowly and exercise care.

It was hard on him to go at a slow pace, and he kept complaining constantly.

"Snails! Snails!" he groaned. "Oh, but a snail or tortoise could travel faster than this!"

"When you get across the river you can go faster," said Sandy.

"Well, I should hope so!"

At last they reached the ferry, and they had to wait about three minutes for the boat.

"They said three minutes," growled Gerald: "but I'd be willing to bet it was three hours!"

"You mean that it seemed like three hours," smiled Sandy.

"Well, perhaps you are right."

"This is a long race that you have entered upon, Gerald," reminded Sandy; "and I don't think the loss of a few minutes now and then will signify much."

"I don't know about that. The way we travel in a car like this, it means at least two miles lost, to be delayed three minutes."

"But you may be sure that the other fellows will meet with as many delays as you will."

"That is true, too, likely."

"Where are they headed for now, Gerald?"

"I think Tully will cross on the 42d street ferry."

"Well, we'll be across the river before they will."

"True; we'll have a little bit the start of them."

When they reached the Jersey side, they headed toward the open country, and when they reached it, Gerald put on speed and they went bowling along at a great rate.

The roads were in good condition, and this made it possible to go at a good clip.

"How fast are we going?" queried Sandy, presently.

"About forty miles an hour," was the reply.

"Say, that's going at a pretty lively pace, for country road traveling, isn't it?

"It'll do," with a smile.

The machine bumped and swayed, and Sandy held on with one hand. Gerald, having hold of the steering-wheel, could keep his seat without difficulty.

All that day they sped onward, and just before sundown they reached the village of Milford, where Sandy had spent most of the years of his life.

Gerald brought the car to a stop in front of the Wilkins home, and Sandy leaped to the ground and ran up the path and knocked on the door. It was opened by Mrs. Wilkins, who stared in amazement at the youth. He had taken off his automobile cap and goggles, and she recognized him at once.

"Why, Sandy!" she exclaimed. "You here? An' have ye come back to stay? Come in! Hank'll be glad ter see ye, an'll give ye your place back if ye want it."

"I haven't come back to stay, Mrs. Wilkins," said Sandy. "I am on my way across the continent, with a friend, in an automobile. He is racing with another fellow. I just stopped to look in and say 'Howdy.' I can't come in, as we want to be many miles from here before it gets so dark as to make traveling at a swift pace impossible."

"Hank! Hank! Come here!" called Mrs. Wilkins.

Mr. Wilkins came to the door. He was able to be up and around, now. He shook hands with Sandy, and said he was glad to see him.

"I hope ye beat the other fellow," he said, heartily, referring to the race.

"I hope so," smiled Sandy. "Well, I must not delay my friend longer. Good-by. Remember me to everybody."

"Good-by."

"We will, Sandy."

He hastened back to the road, climbed in beside Gerald, who cranked the machine and they were off like a flash.

A shrill cry from a boy standing out in front of a store, attracted Sandy's attention, and he recognized little Tommy Hope.

He waved his hand and cried out:

"How are you, Tommy?"

"Sandy! Oh, how air ye, Sandy!" came from the boy, as he waved his hand in return.

Then the motor car was gone, and Tommy turned and dashed away to the Wilkins home as fast as he could go.

He burst in upon the blacksmith and his wife and cried out that he had just seen Sandy Hardin in an automobile.

"Yes; he was here," said Mrs. Wilkins.

"Whur's he goin'?" asked Tommy, eagerly.

They explained that he was on his way to San Francisco, with another young man, racing against another automobile.

"Say, thet's great!" exclaimed Tommy. "How I wish't I could be along with 'em!"

Then he hastened away to tell the wonderful news to some of his boy friends.

Meanwhile the automobile was speeding onward at a good pace.

On, on, into the night it went, the electric search light having been turned on, which made it possible to travel at a good pace, where the roads were good.

On dashed the machine, and about eleven o'clock they reached Elmira.

"We'll stop here till morning," said Gerald. "We can't go all the time, without sleep, and this is as good a place to stop as any."

They stopped at a good hotel, and after seeing that the car was placed in a safe place, they went in and were assigned to a room and got in bed and went to sleep almost instantly.

Gerald left orders to be called at half-past five, and this was done. They got up and dressed, made their toilets, and went down to the dining-room and ate breakfast.

Then they paid their score, went out, got into their motor car, which had been brought around to the front, and went bowling along toward the outskirts of the town.

As soon as they struck the open country, Gerald put on speed, and the way the car dashed along the country road and kicked up the dust was a caution.

This day was but the repetition of the one before. They traveled all day without incident, put up at night at a hotel, and the second day following were in Chicago.

The automobile had held up nobly, so far, but it was in need of attention, and it was decided to spend the rest of the day and the night, in the city, while the machine was being overhauled and gotten in shape.

They went to the Palmer House, and registered, and after resting up a bit, they went out for a walk.

They made their way down to the lake front, and sat down on a bench and drank in the fresh breeze from across the cool, fresh water.

"This is fine!" said Gerald.

"Yes, it is a rest from the sway and jolting of the automobile, Gerald."

"So it is." And then after a few moments, he added: "I wonder where Tully and Seldon are?"

"Hard telling," replied Sandy. "I don't believe, though, that they are as far west of New York as we are."

"Oh, don't you, indeed?" came in a mocking voice from just behind them, and the two whirled—to see Tully and Seldon standing there.

So far the race across the continent was a dead heat!

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this story of a great race. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will never regret it.

Why He Didn't Get Up.

Widow Tannahill's boy was very hard upon his trousers last winter. He would slide down hill on shingles and play see-saw up unplained boards. And so his mother, at last, in desperation placed a sheet-iron patch upon the seat of his trousers, and informed him that when that was worn out he might go bare-legged.

A few days ago the boy was hanging around the foundry just outside the town, and after a while he took a seat upon a pile of pig-iron, so that he could watch the men running molten metal into the moulds. It happened to be iron that had been made out of magnetic ore, and the consequence was that when young Mr. Tannahill tried to rise, for the purpose of going home, he found that the affection of the patch for the pig-iron held him fast. He couldn't imagine what was the matter, and he felt scared about it, but after several ineffectual struggles he abandoned hope, and began to cry. Just then the foreman came out, and seeing the boy, he said:

"What's the matter, sonny?"

"Nothin'."

"Anything ail you?"

"Never you mind."

"Why don't you hush up and go home?"

"'Cause I want to sit here. I want to sit here and think about sumfin."

"Well, now you just git down off of them pigs, and leave. Come, now, skip!"

"No, I won't nuther."

"Hurry up now, or I'll lick you like thunder."

"I bet you won't."

"You get down off that pile or I'll boost you down quicker'n lightnin'."

Then the foreman, in a rage, dashed at Tannahill and tried to haul him off; but he was amazed to find that the boy was too heavy for him. He was a little scared, but he called one of the workmen, and after a struggle they stood Tannahill on the ground. Then they observed that he had two pigs of iron permanently attached crosswise to his trousers, so that as soon as they let go of him he suddenly had to sit down.

Finally they gave him a terrific wrench and got him loose, but the sheet-iron patch stuck to the iron, and Mr. Tannahill's shirt fluttered through an opening big enough to set a bay window in. Then the boy went home; and now the Widow Tannahill has brought suit against the foreman for the value of the wrecked trousers.

The case excites much interest, for the question is, Was the sheet-iron patch to blame, or the magnetism in the pig-iron, or the foreman for trying to keep the boy from going through the world with two hundred pounds of pig on his rear? Blackstone's Commentaries doesn't say a word about such cases, and the lawyers are wild because they can't find any authorities.

No Trifling With Art.

"Pay a man to dab a little whitewash on a fence!" Mr. Davis snorted indignantly. "If I couldn't do fool work like that I'd sell out," he said. Mrs. Davis sighed, bringing the sigh from a deep well of experience, the Galveston News says.

"You'll muss yourself all up," she protested, "and it will hurt your back——"

Mr. Davis laughed scornfully.

"Just you watch me," he said, with confidence. Then he went out and bought a whitewash brush. He paid a quarter for it, and the dealer had tried to make him buy one for seventy-five cents.

"Seventy-five cents for a whitewash brush!" Mr. Davis was so angry he steamed.

Then he bought a bushel of lime and went home. The lime was a fine powder when it came, and when mixed with water became a watery fluid with flakes of white on top. The lime stayed in the bottom of the tub.

When he used the new brush it shed hairs like a setter dog in summer, and, being wet, showed that it possessed two thin rows of hairs on either side and none in the middle. Also, when the whitewashing dried the fence looked in nowise different from its former ugliness. Mr. Davis considered. His back hurt. There was lime in his eyes and he was mad clear through.

He went into the house and found Mrs. Davis preparing to go down town, so he went back to his work.

As soon as she was safely out of sight he headed for a negro shack he knew and resurrected Uncle Peter, who was 76 years old and had been whitewashing and doing odd jobs for seventy years.

He turned the job over to Uncle Peter, who threw his brush into the alley, emptied the whitewash and procurred $2 from him.

With a wheelbarrow Uncle Peter disappeared and shortly returned with a barrowload of lump lime and a brush and set to work. Mr. Davis sat on the steps with his pipe and watched him work.

When Mrs. Davis returned her husband was washed and shaven and the fence was glistening white.

"Why, you did it!" she said. Her evident surprise nettled her husband.

"Of course I did," he said; "I do all I set out to do."

"All by yourself?" inquired Mrs. Davis, admiringly.

"Well," confessed Mr. Davis, "I got Uncle Peter to sorter help me."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Davis, and went in to take off her hat.

Origin of Meteoric Dust.

Meteoric dust particles are infinitely finer than grains of sand. They have an interesting origin. Meteors or shooting stars have been bombarding the world from the beginning at a rate estimated at many thousands an hour, of which, however, an average of only five or six are visible to the naked eye in that time.

Owing to our protecting envelope of air, few of these missiles reach us. In weight meteors vary from a few ounces to many pounds. Occasionally one is of sufficient dimensions to survive the passage of eighty to 100 miles through an atmosphere increasing in density as the earth is approached.

The speed at which they enter the atmosphere, calculated at not less than thirty-five miles a second, generates such intense heat by friction that the iron, of which the meteor principally consists, is immediately reduced to an incandescent vapor, which is the luminous train so frequently seen at night. The vapor rapidly cools and condenses to the form of these minute particles, which assume the spherical form as does shot during its fall from the top of the tower.

Finally the little spheres are scattered by the winds and currents in the upper air and gradually descend in their millions as an invisible, never-ending shower. The perfect condition in which these meteors are found is due to the presence of certain noncorrosive elements, found by analysis to be present in the metal of meteors which have come to earth.

Tragedy of Whiskers.

Simeon Ford said apropos of whiskers:

"I have shaved off my whiskers and it makes me look younger. People now eye me more appreciatively than they used to do. I, unlike poor Tom Angus, have gained by the facial change.

"Tom Angus was an architect of Tombstone. When they expected Mrs. Langtry in Tombstone Tom was appointed to decorate the railway station and the streets. He did so, and he made a good job of it, and after the mayor had congratulated him, he said:

"'Well, Mr. Mayor, since you like my work, introduce me to Mrs. Langtry at the banquet, will you?'

"'Sure, I will,' said the mayor, 'but you must knock that spinach off your chin first. Mrs. Langtry is a lady and she could never stand for a rusty alfalfa field like yours.'

"'But,' stammered Tom, 'but Mr. Mayor, the king——'

"'Cut down the alfalfa crop,' the mayor interrupted, 'and I'll introduce you. Vice versa,' he added, very decidedly.

"So Tom removed his rich whiskers, and that night among the banqueters his white, nude chin was a conspicuous object.

"But the mayor didn't introduce him to the beautiful Mrs. Langtry after all. Between every course and all through the speeches Tom kept winking and nodding to his honor, but it was to no purpose. He didn't get introduced.

"And the next day, after Mrs. Langtry was gone, the mayor, when Tom reproached him, gave a loud laugh.

"'Was that you,' he roared, 'nodding and winking all last night? By Jove, I didn't recognize you, Tom, without your whiskers!'"

Country Store Repartee.

"Do you keep chicken feed?" inquired the customer. The grocer grinned brightly.

"No," he said; "we sell it." The customer received the shock well.

"Do you want some?" the grocer asked.

"No," said the customer, "I don't. But I guess I'll have to have it."

"What kind do you use?" asked the grocer. The customer scowled.

"I don't use it," he remarked. "I feed it to the chickens."

"Oh, rats," said the grocer; "quit your kidding. Get down to the facts. I'm busy today. You came here for chicken feed, didn't you?"

"Not much, I didn't," said the customer. "I came here for a plug of tobacco. I want the chicken feed sent to the house."

"Where do your chickens live?" the grocer inquired. "I've forgotten the number." He grinned brightly again.

"They live in a chicken house," said the customer with great precision. "It's a whitewashed chicken house at the rear of 223 Johnson street. Don't trouble to knock. Just ask for Mr. Plymouth Rock." The grocer scowled in turn.

"Say," he said; "quit this foolishness, will you? There's people waiting on me."

"Wish there was somebody waiting on me," said the customer. "Hurry up. Put that order down. What time will you have it there?"

"I won't have it there," explained the grocer. "I'll have it here and you'll have it there." Then the customer took a handful of crackers from a barrel and departed.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

Three Boys.

There were once three very good little boys, whose names were Johnnykins and Williekins and Peterkins. They lived all by themselves in a little brown house with three chimneys and three windows and three doors.

Every night they locked the windows and bolted the doors and stuffed sacks of straw up the chimneys, and that was because there was a witch in the neighborhood; she had turned everybody she could lay hands on into something else, and she would have liked to turn the little boys into three little bunnies, only she never got a chance, because at night when the witch was around they were always carefully barricaded.

Now the three little boys had an aunt, and her name was Aunt Sally, and she taught those three little boys all she knew every morning, in the hope that when they grew up to be three big boys they would be able to rescue all the people the witch had turned into other things.

Now one morning, while their Aunt Sally was teaching the three little boys their lessons the witch tiptoed up to the window. When she saw what was going on inside she shook her head disapprovingly.

"If those three little boys keep on learning at that rate I shall soon find them formidable," she said to herself.

So, while the three little boys went on studying their lessons, the witch hurried off to their house and carried away one of the three bags of straw.

When the three little boys came home that evening they cooked their supper and ate it off of three little blue plates, and they never noticed that one of the bags of straw was missing until it was time to close the house for the night. When they found there were only two bags they were much distressed.

"What can have become of the third?" they said.

It was all dark outside, and the three little boys were afraid to go out for more straw, so they put the bags up two of the chimneys, locked the windows and bolted the doors, and went to bed in their three little beds, hoping the witch would not come.

But she did. As soon as she thought Johnnykins and Williekins and Peterkins were asleep she came flying along on her broom and tiptoed across the roof until she found the empty chimney. Then she climbed softly down into the house, waved her wand, said some witch words, and while those three little boys were fast asleep she turned them into three little bunnies.

Then, chuckling with glee to think how astonished they would be when they woke, she flew up the chimney and away to her house.

Johnnykins was the first to wake next morning.

"Wake up, Williekins and Peterkins!" he called.

But instead of his seeing his two brothers sit up in bed and rub their eyes, he was very much astonished to behold a small white rabbit in Williekins' bed and a small gray one in Peterkins'.

"Poor Williekins! Poor Peterkins!" he thought, "they've been turned into rabbits!"

Then Williekins woke up, and when he saw his brothers, thought:

"Poor Peterkins! Poor Johnnykins! They've been turned into rabbits!"

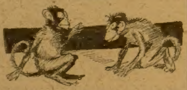
Then Peterkins woke up and thought:

"Poor Williekins! Poor Johnnykins! The witch has turned them into rabbits!"

Now none of the three little boys knew that he himself was a rabbit, and each was afraid of hurting the others' feelings, and so they never said a word about it. They all went on to their aunt's house just as usual, and their Aunt Sally was so polite that she never mentioned the word rabbit for fear of hurting their feelings. So not one of the three ever knew he was a rabbit, and they went on studying just as usual, only harder, because each one made up his mind to study tremendously so that he might release his two brothers.

At last after they had studied for seven months and three days they discovered the secret of the witch's power and were able to turn themselves into little boys again and to restore to their former selves all the people whom the witch had changed.

Chatter.



Mr. Monk—I understand a lot of men have learned to speak monkey language.

Miss Monk—That's awful bad news. Think of what they'll do to us when they find out what we are saying about them.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Thelma, the 5-year-old daughter of an aspirant for office, was told by a neighbor that her father had got the nomination, and, running into the house, she exclaimed: "Oh, mamma! Mr. Brown said papa had got the nomination! I hope he won't have it bad enough to go to the hospital!"

—

Small Alma had a severe cold and, holding a flower to her mother's nose, asked: "Does it smell good, mamma?"

"Yes, dear," replied her mother. "Can't you smell it?"

"No, mamma," answered Alma. "My nose is deaf and dumb."

—

Little Elmer had been chastised for telling a fib. "You should be like George Washington," said the father. "He never told a lie."

"What was the matter with him?" queried Elmer. "Couldn't he talk?"

—

Elmer, aged 6, was limping because of a numbness in one foot and his mother asked what was the matter.

"I feel as if some of me was dead," replied the little fellow.

—

Small Mazie was taken to church for the first time, where the choir loft was above the pulpit. Upon her return home she asked: "Mamma, why did all those who sung have to sit on the mantelpiece?"

He Bought.

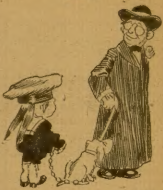
"Please sir, have you a match?" asked the small boy of the hurrying pedestrian.

"No, I have not," snapped the man.

"Then buy some," exclaimed the boy as he held out a handful of boxes.

He did business.

Spotted.



Uncle Jim—Your dog seems to know me, Freddie?

Freddie—Yes, he's a bird dog.

Uncle Jim—Well?

Freddie—Ma says you're a gay old bird.

THE CUB'S PUNISHMENT.

Sir Bruin sat racking his brains one day
  In the midst of the forest scrub,
To think what punishment best would fit
  His smallest and wildest cub.
For Cubby that morning had been so bad
  That his parents were both in despair.
He flatly refused to wash his face
  As well as to brush his hair.
He pinched his mother's stub of a tail,
  And he chewed his sister's ear,
He ate every smitch of the breakfast up
  And greeted his pa with a leer.
He played every trick his brain could devise,
  Till his mother said to his dad:
"I'll leave him to you to punish, my dear;
  For me he's entirely too bad."
And what do you think was the punishment
  Sir Bruin prescribed for his son?
Said he: "If you wish to behave like a boy,
  I'll see that you really are one."
So he hurried the cub to the barber shop
  And shaved him so close and clean
You'd never have thought to look at him
  He ever a bear had been.
And all of the cubs in the forest wild
  Refused to play with him then.
So I think whenever his coat grows long
  He'll never be bad again.

Snake's Eyes.

In a bit of New Jersey woods the air was filled one September day with the rollicking chatter of squirrels as they flung chestnut burs to the ground to ripen. Suddenly they were silent, except for the excited barking of one. Something had frightened them.

A band of chickarees leaped from the spreading branches of a mighty chestnut into the surrounding trees, while one remained behind, running up and down the trunk and barking with all his might at something he saw at its foot.

A big black snake was coiled under a tuft of ferns, with nothing of him visible but the tip of his tail, which gently waved to and fro.

He was playing on a well-known weakness of the squirrel-kind, and with flat head turned kept one lidless eye riveted on his prey through the leaves to note the effect of the maneuvers.

Poor little Chick! He was simply bursting with curiosity. He could not tear himself away till he had found out what that strange moving thing down there really was. Still he felt uneasy. His companions were gone and he was alone with the mystery.

Down he ran again, a little lower than before, but still well out of reach; he stood at gaze a few moments, then scurried back to his limb, deriding the thing that would not show itself and be done with it.

The snake "lay low," softly moving his tail.

Another scramble down the plank, lower yet; every nerve quivering, eyes gleaming, plumy tail flirting in the air at every imperious bark.

Black Snake's head stole slowly into sight; his eyes, no longer dull, showed fire; from his widespread jaws his tongue darted forth, like flickering flame.

Chick's soft eyes encountered that stare; his jaunty bark changed to a faint squeaking. He turned to fly, but slowly, reluctantly he crept downward, a step at a time.

The snake reared his head to strike. Another inch for poor Chick, and he had been gone!

With a shrill burst of chattering another squirrel leaped on the branch above. Chick awoke from his horrid trance, and as the snake darted at him there was a sound like the scream of an enraged cat, with an optical illusion of a tiny red squirrel, swelled to enormous proportions, flying on the foe with teeth and claws.

The snake started back as if he had received an electric shock. The performance was startling enough to make any one jump.

Then Chick joined his faithful mate, mother or crony, whichever it was, and the pair swung safely aloft, jeering at the baffled murderer as he sullenly slunk away.

He Got It.

There was once a little boy that used to cry for the moon. He cried and cried every time the moon was full and he could see it in the sky, and his mother did not know what to do. One day his bachelor uncle heard about the little boy's wish for the moon. And the bachelor uncle gave the little boy the moon. At any rate, he gave the little boy a little round mirror, and the boy could catch the moon in the mirror any evening that he liked when the moon was full and he stayed up to see it, and he was happy ever afterward.

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